

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

BEAUTIES OF CREATION,

AND ON ALL THE

PRINCIPAL TRUTHS AND BLESSINGS

OF THE

GLORIOUS GOSPEL;

WITH THE

SINS AND GRACES

OF

PROFESSING CHRISTIANS.

VOL. I.

THE THIRD EDITION.

By JOHN RYLAND, A. M.
OF NORTHAMPTON.

NORTHAMPTON,
Printed by THOMAS DICEY.

M.DCC.LXXX.

CONTEMPORARY

RESEARCHES

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A
CONTEMPLATION
ON THE
EXISTENCE AND PERFECTIONS of GOD,
DRAWN FROM THE
SEVERAL PARTS OF THE VISIBLE WORLD,
THE
STRUCTURE OF THE HUMAN BODY,
AND THE
WONDERFUL POWERS OF THE SOUL;
AS AN IMAGE OF THE
WISDOM, POWER, AND THE INVISIBLE AND
IMMORTAL NATURE OF GOD.

CONTENTS

THE HISTORY AND PROGRESS OF GOD,

SEVERAL PARTS OF THE VISIBLE WORLD,



WONDERS OF THE SOUL;

WISDOM FOR THE INTELLECT AND
IMMORTALITY OF GOD.

To my WORTHY FRIENDS in LONDON, BRISTOL,
and NORTHAMPTON, and several other parts
of the KINGDOM, who have encouraged the
publication of these CONTEMPLATIONS.

Dear and honoured Friends,

AS this work is designed to give a pleasing
and comprehensive view of all the branches
of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, I must desire your
attention for a few moments, whilst I lay before
you the chief outlines, and the manner in which
I have conducted the whole.

I have determined to take no principle of re-
ligion upon trust; that is, I have not supposed
any one thing to be true, but my own existence;
and this is so evident, that I cannot make it more
plain by any kind of reasoning whatsoever. I
proceed to consider the most striking and popular
evidences of the existence of God—and in the
second CONTEMPLATION, I shall prove the im-
mortality of the soul, and represent its powers
and affections in the most easy and familiar man-
ner, on the principles of reason alone—in the
third CONTEMPLATION, I shall set before you the
nature and madness of atheism,* and its ruinous
consequences to mankind—in the fourth CON-
TEMPLATION,

* This part is omitted on account of the horrid deformity of the subject.

TEMPLATION, I shall attempt to demonstrate the utter insufficiency of reason, in its present state, to lead us to eternal happiness, or the everlasting possession of the favour of God. I shall then easily evince the absolute necessity of a divine revelation to lead us to the clear knowledge of God and our duty, and a state of future happiness or eternal life. We shall go on to demonstrate the possibility of a revelation from God—the nature of inspiration, and the clear evidences of it.—As this is a subject of great difficulty, and unutterable importance, I must proceed, by slow and sure steps, to state this matter in the most clear and unexceptionable manner in my power; and, indeed, this I have found, by many years experience, to be the most arduous part of my work: it requires the most intense thoughts, and the most severe attention and care; how I have succeeded, must be left to the candid and impartial judgment of my readers. I trust I have not written one line, but with a sacred reverence of God, and with clear and determinate ideas, as far as the very sublime nature of the subject would admit. I desire to write every page of this work with a prospect of the awful tribunal of God: before him I must shortly appear to give an account of all the secret springs of my actions, and all the labours of my life. I know, after thirty-two years enquiry, that, on the principles of reason, my soul is immortal; and, on the principles of the gospel, my eternal existence,
either

either blisful or miserable, must be determined by the word and will of the Lord Jesus Christ: I am certain, that, by Him, every man's character will be declared, and the state of every soul fixed for eternity. At my time of life, there is not a moment to be lost in trifling with God and the souls of men; I would therefore wish to be as serious as death in every thing I do for the service of mankind. The happiness of the rising generation lies very near my heart, and to that object I direct all my labours and all my views. If I may promote and propagate the clear knowledge of God in Christ, and vital holiness in the souls of men—if I can but possess a peaceful conscience and an approving God, I shall feel myself not only easy under any unkind suspicions of men, but shall be safe from unjust censure and scorn. I hope I shall pity bad men, and love good men, even if they should treat me with severity and rigour. If I should be found in any material error, I will readily acknowledge it, and gratefully love the friend who shall point it out.

When we have fully demonstrated the divine inspiration and authority of the holy Scriptures, we shall proceed to display their excellent usefulness to the souls of men—the affections of true christians towards these sacred writings, with rules for the right understanding of the law and gospel—we shall close this part of our work with a plain and easy view of the whole book of the Revelations.

We

We shall then advance to the consideration of the glorious perfections of God—the scripture doctrine of the true and proper divinity of the Son and Spirit of God—a prospect of the various parts of creation—and a large demonstration of a special and peculiar providence for the support of sincere believers in Christ. We shall consider the original perfections and glory of man—his ruin and recovery in all its capital parts—and take a view of all the doctrines and blessings of grace—the various branches of sin and duty—the beauty of social religion, and the last scenes of death—the immortality of the soul, on the principles of revelation—the terror and glory of the resurrection, the eternal judgment, heaven and hell.

Such is the work now proposed to the consideration of serious young christians in general. The author commits himself and his readers to the providence and grace of the most glorious redeemer of souls, waiting for that hour when we expect a most solemn interview in the presence of God.

JOHN RYLAND.

NORTHAMPTON, March 8, 1780.

12 JY 62

INTRO-

On the 1st of April, 1778, was published, Price 5s. in Boards,

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

FIRST GREAT PRINCIPLES

OF

TRUE RELIGION.

By JOHN RYLAND, A. M. of NORTHAMPTON.

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TO the PUBLIC.

The next volume will contain a view of real miracles.—Fulfilment of prophecies.—The moral character of the penmen, and the moral character of Christ.—Rules for understanding the holy Scriptures in general.—Rules for understanding the law and gospel, the prophecies, and the book of the Revelations.—Views of the natural and moral perfections of God.—The true deity of Christ and the holy Spirit.—Concluding with a view of the worship due to the three persons in one Godhead, and the glorious uses of this vital and essential truth of divine revelation.

N. B. A translation of Dr. Lowth's latin verses will be given in vol. 2.

12 JY 62

Just published, Price 1s. 6d.

A GRAMMAR and KEY

TO THE

GREEK TESTAMENT in ENGLISH.

Sold by Keith, Dilly, and Vallance.

INTRODUCTION.

THE ideas of existence, and the ideas of a God, do not immediately appear connected so clearly and instantly as the ideas of existence, and the idea of our own being; or so readily as we perceive that two and two make four.

But the existence of God will admit of proof by making use of other ideas or representations of the visible things of the universe, whose agreement, with the idea of God, is in a moment perceived by the mind in the whole process of demonstration.

Demonstration is an easy process of reasoning, beginning from some plain and self-evident truth, and regularly descending by a clear connexion, or chain of ideas, till you come at your conclusion.

Reasoning is employed only about demonstrable truths, and our intuitive and self-evident perceptions are the ultimate foundation on which all our reasoning rests.

And in this manner we have proceeded with respect to this contemplation and easy demon-
 Vol. I. a stration

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stration of the existence and perfections of God. We have made use of other ideas, taken from the visible creation and the soul of man; and the agreement of these ideas, with our idea of God, is instantly seen by every man of common sense, in the whole process of the demonstration.

And thus we may proceed, with respect to all the branches of natural and revealed religion, and by beginning with clear self-evident truths and simple ideas, and advancing by easy steps, produce a satisfying and beautiful evidence of every doctrine and duty of the christian religion; and display, in a striking and alluring manner, to our ingenious and pious youth, all the parts of vital holiness and social virtue: and, at the same time, the opposite sins and vices may be painted in the most ugly and disgusting colours, so as to expose them to the hatred and scorn of every person that has the least love for his own soul, or the lowest degree of desire to avoid utter ruin for both worlds.

Thus we may display, in contrast, the horrid deformity and madness of atheism, and the beauties of true religion; the detestable ugliness of infidelity, and the excellence of true faith; the loveliness of gratitude to God, and the deformity and horrors of ingratitude. The nature, appearance, and horrid effects of pride, as it is a resemblance

semblance of the devil, and the beauties and happy consequences of deep humility.

Thus we may display the horrors of rash anger, and the infernal malignity of envy and revenge, with all the lovely charms of meekness and patience.

The infinite evil of apostasy from the gospel, and the causes and ruinous consequences of such a dreadful temper, can never be set in too strong a light, or painted in too terrible a manner.

The luxury, riot, debauchery, lust, and madness of the present age, can never be painted in colours equal to the life: our language hath no words nor powers equal to the subject, nor is there a language in the world strong and copious enough for it: a new one ought to be made on purpose that has phrases, images, and energies, that were never seen before; and even then, the keenness of a Juvenal, the imaginative powers of a Milton, the force and grandeur of a Young united, would be all too weak to use an eloquence and language equal to our crimes.

The lukewarmness and hypocrisy of multitudes of professors of christianity, ought to be displayed in the most vivid and striking manner, to the end that the guilty may see their own picture, and tremble at the frightful deformity: at the same time, a well-informed and rational

iv. INTRODUCTION.

zeal, remote from blind bigotry, and well purged from uncharitableness, and a bitter, bloody, absurd spirit of persecution; I say, a well-illuminated zeal for the truths and purity of the gospel, demands and deserves to be displayed in all its shining beauty and lovely colours. Never was a judicious and manly zeal for the glory of God more wanting than in our day.

In a word, all the parts of practical religion, with the opposite sins and vices, may be treated with great advantage in short dissertations, and so as to instruct, convince, and persuade, at the same time.

I will not say that I have been able to execute a work in this manner; but this I may affirm, that I have had an hearty good will to it for thirty-five years past.

On March 16, 1745, I first laid down my plan of a body of divinity, including all the principal branches of natural and revealed religion, and I have been working at it ever since, sometimes with more assiduity and success, and sometimes with less; but I believe few days have passed without some view to it, or preparation for it. I began it for my own use, and in order to fit myself the better to execute the office which divine providence and grace assigned me: whatever I have met with in books, or public sermons,
or

INTRODUCTION. ▼

or conversation with wise and good men, I have seized as my own, judging that the whole system of truth and knowledge lies free and open to every man that has a love for it. I would wish to imitate the bee, who roves over all the fields and flowers, and converts to her own use whatever she finds fit for her purpose: she carries home her spoils, and works them up in her own way, without ever being accused of theft or injustice.

However, as a Pagan could observe, that it is honest and grateful to acknowledge your obligations to all those from whom you have received instruction and advantage; so I would, with the utmost gratitude and pleasure, confess, that even this first essay would not probably have been written, if I had not read Ray, Derham, and Cambray: Mr. Martin's Demonstration of the Existence of God especially, pleased and struck me so much, that after reading and digesting it, I was determined to attempt to write a more easy Contemplation on the same plan: any person of taste, who shall think it proper to compare them together, will see that his dissertation is more learned, copious, and philosophical than mine: on the other hand, mine is adapted to the capacities of all sensible and virtuous young persons, and is, upon the whole, best suited to my design, as a proper foundation to all my other Contemplations.

Upon

vi INTRODUCTION.

Upon a review of a great variety of authors* on the Existence of God, I think most of them too abstracted, or too prolix, to suit the understanding and taste of our British youth. The most simple, striking, and popular arguments, are those which are drawn from the visible world, the structure of the human body, and the powers and passions of the soul; these are adapted to the common sense and reason of all mankind, and will be found the best sources of evidence as long as the world endures.

If any person of reading and taste shall think it worth his while to read over this essay on God and the soul, he will easily perceive that I am indebted to Mr. Grove, Mr. Hubbard, Charnock, Beattie, Dr. Waterland, Dr. Samuel Wright, Dr. Watts, Mr. Addison, Dr. Blair, Dr. Leng, Dr. Gill, and Dr. Young.

In all my subsequent Contemplations and Demonstrations, I have freely borrowed whatever is fit for my purpose from every quarter. I take a delight in acknowledging my obligations to many authors of the richest genius, taste, and piety; and

* The best authors are, 1. Dr. Cudworth. 2. Dr. Wilkins. 3. Mr. John Howe. 4. Charnock. 5. Tillotson. 6. Mr. Ray. 7. Dr. Bates. 8. Mr. Locke. 9. Dr. John Edwards. 10. Dr. Bentley. 11. Dr. Clarke. 12. Dr. Derham. 13. Dr. Wisheart. 14. Whiston's Astronomical Principles of Religion. 15. Dr. Nieuwentyte's Religious Philosopher. 16. Cambrey on the Existence of God. 17. Mr. Robt. Millar. 18. Wollaston. 19. Dr. Leng. 20. Sir Richard Blackmore. 21. Dr. Ridgely. 22. Mr. Abernethy. 23. Mr. Grove. 24. Dr. Gill. 25. Dr. Cotton Mather.

INTRODUCTION vii

and rejoice in the occasion I have to subscribe to the words of the most amiable and excellent Rollin. "En un mot, tout ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans cet ouvrage n'est point de moi; & que m'importe d'où il soit, pourvû qu'il se trouve utile à la jeunesse, qui est le seul but que j'ai dû me proposer?"

"Je n'ai garde de vouloir me faire honneur des richesses d'autrui: il y auroit en cela quelque chose de plus que de l'imprudence. Je souhai-teroie seulement qu'elles pussent couvrir ma pauvreté, & que cette foule de beautès etrangeres qui ornent mon ouvrage fît oublier, ou du moins excuser, les défauts qui me sont personnels."†

† See Rollin's *De la Maniere d'Enseigner et d'Etudier Les Belles Lettres*, tome premier, page 109.

N. B. The first part of this volume is reprinted a fourth time.

NORTHAMPTON, Feb. 16, 1780.

POST-

vi INTRODUCTION.

Upon a review of a great variety of authors* on the Existence of God, I think most of them too abstracted, or too prolix, to suit the understanding and taste of our British youth. The most simple, striking, and popular arguments, are those which are drawn from the visible world, the structure of the human body, and the powers and passions of the soul; these are adapted to the common sense and reason of all mankind, and will be found the best sources of evidence as long as the world endures.

If any person of reading and taste shall think it worth his while to read over this essay on God and the soul, he will easily perceive that I am indebted to Mr. Grove, Mr. Hubbard, Charnock, Beattie, Dr. Waterland, Dr. Samuel Wright, Dr. Watts, Mr. Addison, Dr. Blair, Dr. Leng, Dr. Gill, and Dr. Young.

In all my subsequent Contemplations and Demonstrations, I have freely borrowed whatever is fit for my purpose from every quarter. I take a delight in acknowledging my obligations to many authors of the richest genius, taste, and piety; and

* The best authors are, 1. Dr. Cudworth. 2. Dr. Wilkins. 3. Mr. John Howe. 4. Charnock. 5. Tillotson. 6. Mr. Ray. 7. Dr. Bates. 8. Mr. Locke. 9. Dr. John Edwards. 10. Dr. Bentley. 11. Dr. Clarke. 12. Dr. Derham. 13. Dr. Wisheart. 14. Whiston's Astronomical Principles of Religion. 15. Dr. Nieuwentyte's Religious Philosopher. 16. Cambray on the Existence of God. 17. Mr. Robt. Millar. 18. Wollaston. 19. Dr. Leng. 20. Sir Richard Blackmore. 21. Dr. Ridgely. 22. Mr. Abernethy. 23. Mr. Grove. 24. Dr. Gill. 25. Dr. Cotton Mather.

INTRODUCTION vii

and rejoice in the occasion I have to subscribe to the words of the most amiable and excellent Rollin. "En un mot, tout ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans cet ouvrage n'est point de moi; & que m'importe d'où il soit, pourvû qu'il se trouve utile à la jeunesse, qui est le seul but que j'ai dû me proposer?"

"Je n'ai garde de vouloir me faire honneur des richesses d'autrui: il y auroit en cela quelque chose de plus que de l'imprudence. Je souhaiterois seulement qu'elles pussent couvrir ma pauvreté, & que cette foule de beautès etrangeres qui ornent mon ouvrage fît oublier, ou du moins excuser, les défauts qui me sont personnels."†

† See Rollin's *De la Maniere d'Enseigner et d'Etudier Les Belles Lettres*, tome premier, page 109.

N. B. The first part of this volume is reprinted a fourth time.

NORTHAMPTON, Feb. 16, 1780.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

The reader is desired to observe, that the glorious discoveries of divine revelation are not introduced in this Contemplation, because we have not yet demonstrated the divine authority and inspiration of the Scriptures; but we have, in the present essay, proceeded on the principles of reason, though it was difficult for a man who feels the strongest veneration and love for the word of God, to restrain himself in this manner.

12 JY 62

A CON-

A
C O N T E M P L A T I O N
O N T H E
E X I S T E N C E A N D P E R F E C T I O N S O F G O D.

As demonstrated from views of MEER MATTER—
the SUN—the PLANETS—the MOON—COMETS—
FIXED STARS—the AIR—WATER—OUR EARTH,
and its internal FURNITURE—VEGETABLES—
ANIMALS in general—BIRDS—FISHES—INSECTS
—REPTILES, especially SERPENTS—the NATURE
and FORM of MAN, including the wonderful
STRUCTURE of the HUMAN BODY, and the
amazing POWERS and AFFECTIONS of the HU-
MAN SOUL—NATURAL AFFECTIONS and DUTIES
to GOD, as the PARENT of the UNIVERSE, in
seven INSTANCES.

A R E P R E S E N T A T I O N O F G O D.

GOD is a spiritual being, the first cause of all
things.

God is infinite being and goodness, in a nature
that understands and subsists of itself.

God is infinite goodness, eternally satisfied with
the perfect love and knowledge of himself, and
taking a complacency in himself by internal actings.

VOL. I.

A

This

This gives us the true idea and notion of the divine nature, antecedent to the creation of the world.

God is a spiritual being, endued with absolute and universal dominion.

God is the supreme and perfect being, upon whom the existence and powers of all other beings originally and constantly depend.

God is that being, without whom, such a frame or constitution of the world, such a magnificent structure could not be for one moment.

God is the creator of all things, the first and the eternal being, the greatest, the wisest, and the best of beings, the sovereign LORD and disposer of all his works. The righteous governor of his intellectual creatures, and the only proper object of their worship.

Dr. WATTS.

We have already observed in the introduction, that the idea of existence and the idea of God do not so soon appear connected as the idea of existence in general, and the idea of our own being; or so readily as we perceive the agreement of some objects with other objects around us.

But the being of God will admit of proof; and it demands proof by the reason that God has given us: he has so formed our minds, as to stir up our diligence, and prevent laziness: 'tis a striking

striking instance of the wisdom of God, in framing our souls in such a manner, as that we are obliged to use our reason to discern the God that made us: and we cannot possibly approach to intire intuition, in our knowledge of God, in the present state of our embodied spirits.

The most simple and easy method of proof, with respect to the existence of God, is by making use of ideas, drawn from all the visible objects in the creation; the agreement of which ideas, with the idea of a wise, powerful, good being, is instantly and unavoidably seen by the mind in the whole process of its operations and reasonings.

I earnestly wish to have my young reader stop here, and well digest these preliminary thoughts; he will then go on with pleasure and delight through the following easy demonstration of the existence of a God.

Demonstration is a regular procedure of the human understanding; it consists in beginning with one idea of your subject, and then joining a second idea of the same kind with the first, and a third to the second; and so on in a clear connexion.

Thus, in demonstrating the existence of God, which is not known to the human mind by intuitive ease, but requires a step beyond intuition,—we

make use of ideas, taken from the parts of the visible creation, whose agreement with the idea of God is instantly seen by the mind in every step of the demonstration.

Thus, the ideas we have of the sun, the moon, the planets, the comets, the air, fire, earth and seas, the plants, animals, and the structure and powers of man, instantly agree with our idea of a God, as a first cause of all; possess of infinite understanding and power: and it is impossible for the mind to act as a rational agent, without perceiving the agreement of these productions in creation with the idea of a God.

And this is the method which the human mind pursues in all demonstrations of any truth whatsoever; but our present design is only to demonstrate the existence of God.

Any man of common sense, and common honesty, may observe, that, in evincing the being of a God, we proceed, by short steps of the understanding, from ideas of the creatures to an idea of a God, the intelligent and powerful cause of those creatures: from thoughts of the visible world, to a rational thought of God, the author of that world, in proper words, and in a clear connexion of ideas, till you come to a satisfying conclusion, concerning the being of a God; which conclusion shall appear as evident to the mind

mind as the first idea with which you set out : and the whole chain of ideas shall appear to the eye of the understanding to be clearly and closely connected, and give your soul that keen impresson of truth, and strike the mind with that evidence and force, which is called conviction. And as reason is only employed about demonstrable truths, so our common sense, or intuitive perceptions, are the ultimate and sure foundation on which all our reasoning firmly and eternally rests*.

Let

* Our idea of existence, and our idea of a God, do not appear at first sight so connected as the idea of existence, and the idea of our own being ; besides these two ideas, of existence and of ourselves, are seen by intuition, and appear so connected, that we cannot separate them ; we cannot possibly deny their agreement, nor can we make them plainer by any third idea.

And thus it is with all axioms or self-evident truths---such are these, the whole is greater than a part. If to equal things be added equals, the sums are equal. If from equal things be taken away equals, the remainder will be equal.---But the existence of a God, the grand first intelligent cause of all things, will admit of proof by reasoning ; that is, by making use of other ideas, whose agreement with the idea of God is instantly seen by the mind ; and it cannot be otherwise ; when the soul compares these third ideas with the idea of existence and the idea of a God, it must see the connexion.

Every honest free-thinker will make use of his understanding to discern the existence and perfections of God : he will use those third ideas, that will enable him to see the agreement between the idea of existence and the idea of a first cause, which we call God : he will call in to his mind the ideas of the heavens, the earth and seas, the plants and animals : he will call in to his aid the intuitive perceptions he has of his own body and soul, with their various and wonderful operations : and from all these ideas he will be powerfully convinced of the existence of a wise, good, and almighty God ; on whom we ourselves, and all worlds, depend.

An atheist is not an honest enquirer after truth : he is a wretch of a sickly and vitiated understanding ; he will not make use of those ideas of the visible creation which are in his mind to enable him to discern the being of a God.

Let us now proceed, my dear reader, to take a walk through this grand temple of universal nature ; and, in every step of our progress, with wonder and devotion contemplate the great original parent and cause of all things.

A DEMONSTRATION of the EXISTENCE of GOD.

There is a God, a supreme and most perfect being, and the fountain of being and perfection to the universe.

That there is a God, all nature cries aloud through all her works.

I. The mere EXISTENCE of MATTER shews the EXISTENCE of GOD.

All matter is passive and dead, totally void of motion, utterly incapable of beginning the least motion. Who actuates matter? Who is the beginner of motion? Who causes attraction in very near distances? Who gives the power of repulsion when bodies exceed certain distances? Who causes repulsion to begin where attraction ends? What is the cause of innumerable classes of consistent hard bodies? Who has made a variety of elastic bodies? What is the cause of the constant and incessant action of an attracting power, quite through the creation to the centres of the planets? And how is it that this attractive power doth not act like a mechanical power, by contact, nor according

cording to the quantity of surface, but according to the solid contents of the attracting bodies? How if the mutual attraction and gravitation of all bodies in the universe was to cease for one hour, what would become of the world? Where would be the globe of the earth? Where would be the planetary worlds? Where would be the mountains, the seas, and the buildings of men? What would become of all the cities and kingdoms of the earth? Would you not see all the frame of nature dissolved, and the heavens and earth in one tremendous ruin?

II. Do not the *USES* of the *SUN* demonstrate a *G O D*?

Who gave it such a prodigious magnitude? How came it into its situation in our system? Who made the matter of the sun's body, of such a sort, as to cause the most pure and intense heat? Who made it a hundred times larger in diameter than our globe? Who made it the grand fountain of light and heat to the whole world of planets, animals, metals, and men? Who adjusted its distance to such a nicety, as to answer the noblest ends and uses? O man! would not your heart's blood freeze if the sun were farther distant? Would not your blood boil in your veins, and your skin be scorched to parchment, were the sun nearer to our world, or if it made a nearer approach to man?

How

How comes the sun to go so many degrees north beyond the equator in the summer? and so exactly proceed as far to the south in the winter? Who gave him this oblique motion to our globe? Who causes his daily course round the world?* and his yearly circuit in so regular an orbit, as to come round to the same place again in 365 days?

III. The PLANETARY WORLDS supply convincing PROOFS of INFINITE and ETERNAL POWER.

Who made the parts of the planets, i. e. land and water? Who made the atmospheres of the planets? Who gave the planets their figure and form? Is not a globe the most commodious? Would not a large plain, or a square in our earth, or, the planets, ruin the whole system? Doth not the spherical or round figure result from the equal and uniform attraction of gravity? Is not the least planet above two thousand miles in diameter? Is not the largest planet fourscore thousand in diameter? Are not the ten moons in our system the effect of infinite wisdom? Is not the number of the planets the fruit of perfect design? What think you of the direction of their motion all from west to east? Do you imagine that their diurnal rotation round their axes follows from their annual? No, not at all. Is not the oblique position of their axes most excellently suited to the variety of seasons? Can you behold the different and opposite forces,

* Sir Isaac Newton would speak in this manner in common conversation.

forces, originally impressed, and perpetually in action, and not see a God? Can you consider the wise and perfect adjustment of these two forces, so as to produce the circular motion of these bodies, and not fall down and adore their glorious author?

IV. The DOCTRINE of the MOONS is a copious SOURCE of ARGUMENTS, to demonstrate an all-perfect GOD.

Is it not delightful to observe, how these secondary planets revolve about the primary ones, by the very same laws that govern those primaries? Is not the magnitude of the moons fitted to their use and office; and their distances from their primaries adjusted with the most perfect skill? Are not their laws of projectile and centripetal force, precisely the same as those of the superior planets? How great are their uses! How various the ends of our moon, to agitate the watery world; and to produce the most wonderful and useful motions, the flux and reflux of the seas, called the tides; with a thousand various uses besides! Do not you think that some of the moons of Saturn and Jupiter are bigger than our earth? And none are much less than Mercury and Mars. Are these the productions of chance and blind fortune, or the effects of fate and necessity? Are they not rather the

productions of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness?

V. The COMETS lay open to our view amazing SCENES of the OMNIPOTENCE of GOD.

What is the substance of which these bodies consist? Is it not of a singular nature? Do not you see it so fixed as never to be consumed? and yet so volatile as to emit millions of rays of fire to your sight. What is the power by which these bodies are moved? Who impressed upon them their projectile force? Who gave them their elliptical orbits? Who made those ellipses so various in their kinds and distances? Is not the velocity of their motions surprisngly various? Are not their motions when near the sun four hundred millions of times swifter than when farthest distant from the sun? Who made such a number of comets (above forty)? How came they to have such different periods? Why is one no more than seventy-five years, whilst others are near five hundred years in performing their revolutions? What is the reason that they move in such different directions with respect to one another, and to the planets; whilst all the planets and satellites move from west to east in their periodical revolutions?

VI. The

VI. The FIXED STARS are innumerable DEMONSTRATIONS of a GOD.

Are not all the fixed stars real suns and centres of worlds? Do they not enlighten and warm systems of planets, that revolve around these central fires? What is the sun in our world but a point, when compared with the vast extent of the cometary field, and the starry heavens? Suppose our sun was removed to ten times the distance from us, would it not appear a hundred times less? Does not the distance even of the nearest fixed star, SYRIUS, exceed the power of calculation? Suppose found to move at the rate of velocity of seven millions of miles per annum, when would it reach the nearest fixed star? Are not two things absolutely necessary to render the fixed stars in the least degree visible to us? Is not a vast and prodigious bulk necessary? Is not a pure intense fire and innate light essentially needful to give us the least sight of these immensely distant worlds? Who fixed their distance? Who gave us faculties to view these remote glories of the skies?

VII. The ATMOSPHERE or AIR is a fruitful SOURCE of DEMONSTRATION of a glorious CREATOR.

Is not the air the great mean of vegetable life? Would not all trees, plants, and herbs

die without air? Do you not find, that the air is the grand basis and food of all animal life? What bird, beast, or fish, could live a few hours without air? Air contains the nourishment and vital spirit for all living creatures. O atheist! thou canst not live an hour without air! Feel thy dependence on God and his creatures. Is not the air the grand medium of light? How could the sun's rays be tempered suitably, and transmitted to us agreeably without air? The heat would be too intense upon us without air. Is not the air the grand seed-plot of thunders, the fuel of lightnings, and the mean of their appearance? How surprising is the elasticity of the air! How amazing the springiness of its texture! What a noble and proper medium of sound! All the sweet and melodious sounds of music would be lost to us without air. Could there be any rains or dews without air? No clouds could exist without air. No snows or frosts without air. Do not the winds purge the air, and prevent stagnation, putrefaction, and death? Is not the air furnished with pure subtle particles, which are the vital spirit and balm of our blood, and feed the flame of all animal life?

VIII. The ELEMENT of WATER evidences the utmost WISDOM and DESIGN.

Here final causes pour in upon us from every quarter, resistless as the tides of the ocean; and
bear

bear down all atheistical impudence with an irresistible torrent! Are not the fluid particles exactly suited to their use and ends? Does not this fluidity of water render it a most proper element for whales and minnows; with all the intermediate sizes and species of fish? Is not the ocean the glorious basis of navigation, and the grand mean of commerce and trade for all the nations of the globe? Is not the sea the universal cistern for rains, the grand and inexhaustible reservoir for rivers, springs, and pools of water? Does not the vast world of waters furnish the principal nourishment of all the tribes of plants and animals in the world? Do we not find in the seas an astonishing variety of curious and beautiful vegetables, perhaps richer than any upon land? Marine productions, especially corals, are striking instances of the immense riches of creating wisdom and goodness.

IX. The **GLOBE** of our **EARTH**, in all its **PARTS**, proclaims an infinite, powerful, and glorious **GOD**.

View all its external parts. What think you of its lofty mountains; its towering hills; its humble vallies? See how the rocks serve for springs! the vallies for fruitfulness and pasturage! How various the moulds and beds of earth! How are the several soils suited to all the purposes of vegetation?

Vegetation? Is not the surface of the globe the grand basis of husbandry, and all sorts of precious grain? Is it not the ground-work of all gardening, plants, fruits, and flowers? Does not the face of some parts of the globe serve for good manure to produce fruitfulness in others? Is not our earth the grand mother of all our foods and all our beauteous flowers? Survey the internal parts of our earthly ball: what various quarries of stone for buildings of all kinds, from the meanest cottage to the grandest structure! what beds of coals for our fires! what veins of all sorts of minerals! what various ores for metals! what stores of lead! what beds of iron! and what immense treasures of silver and gold, which serve us for monies for commerce, and all the uses of civil and animal life! and what variety of precious stones of various colours and amazing brilliancy! above all, what beneficence in God to furnish us with that inestimable jewel, the Magnet, or Loadstone; which excels, in point of worth and usefulness, all the precious stones in the whole creation!

X. The whole VEGETABLE WORLD demonstrates
a GOD.

What an amazing number of kinds! Are there not above sixteen thousand species of vegetables? What do you think of the structure of a plant?

Do

Do you not see the wisdom of a Deity in the make of a vegetable? How beautiful is the growth of all vegetables, according to the laws of nature on fluids! how curious the parts, the leaves, the flowers, the fruit, the seed! How do the virtues of vegetables, for food and medicine, proclaim the exquisite wisdom and beneficence of the adorable Creator!

XI. ANIMALS, or animated MATTER, supply most amazing PROOFS of a GOD.

The structure of animals is more complete than that of vegetables. Is not the growth of all animals an effect superior to that of vegetables? Does not animal life depend on fresh food, as well as on air and water? Is not animal growth the effect of a proper digestion, and a regular distribution of the nutritious particles to every part? How suitable are the provisions for every kind of animals? How nicely and well adjusted their apparatus to receive and digest their food? See the mouth to receive! the teeth to *chew*! the tongue to assist in chewing! the gullet to transmit to the bowels! the stomach to digest! the intestines to strain off, by means of the lacteals! mark the progress of the chyle into the blood! see the colour and texture of this grand stream of life! how delicate the system of the nerves for feeling! how divine the structure of the eyes!
how

how accurately formed are the ears for sound! how exact the nostrils! and what a rich silver cord is the spinal marrow! Is not the prone posture of quadrupeds the most suited to their food and manner of life! Is not their motion on all four admirable? Are not the forms of their bodies amazingly various? Yet, is not every different species beautiful in its kind? See the various cloathing of animals! Are they not suited to their dwellings, and stations in the creation? Is not their natural armature truly expressive of wise design and perfect contrivance in its almighty author? Observe their grand governing principle, which directs and animates all their motions and pursuits! Is not the supreme law of instinct a more uniform and infallible guide to beasts, than reason to man? Who has impressed this law on all animals, and taught them to pursue invariably, and attain their ends and the perfection of their being, without forethought or design? Who, but a God, can direct these creatures to attain their proper end without any rational knowledge or intention?

XII. The NATURE of BIRDS furnishes irresistible ARGUMENTS of the WISDOM of GOD.

View their heads; how adapted for flying! admire their various beaks and eyes! What do you think of their manner of motion? What do
you

you judge of their power of flying through the air? Are not the variety of their movements in the atmosphere wonderful? How well fitted are their wings and muscles for flight, and how suited are their claws to seize their prey, or defend their lives! what art in their nest! what beauty in their eggs! how patient and constant in hatching their young! how strong and violent their natural love to their offspring! how beautiful and grand are their plumage or feathers! how surprising are their journies or travels, for thousands of miles, without chart or compass!

XIII. The NATURE of FISHES is a manifold DEMONSTRATION of a GOD.

Consider their habitation, the larger and the lesser waters. Is not the watry world suited to their nature and genius, and their constitution and capacity admirably adapted to the fluid element? Is not the action of swimming wonderful? Are they not provided with a proper apparatus for swimming? Do you not observe how their bodies, their heads, their fins, their bladders, are all suited to this purpose? How keen and quick is their sight! Does not this supply their want of ears? Are they not totally destitute of ears and lungs? But do not their quick eyes supply their want of ears? and do not their gills fully supply their want of lungs? How

admirably contrived are these gills, by which they live and breathe! how delicate their covering! what exquisite art and beauty in the texture and colour of their scales! how free their motions! how nimbly they cut the water! and how fitly are many classes furnished with arms for defence! what an amazing beauty in the shell fish! what an endless variety in the forms! what garniture! what brilliancy and profusion of ornament on their shells! what amazing curiosity and neatness of work! and what a shining proof of the exuberant goodness and artifice of God!

XIV. The NATURE of INSECTS furnishes a prolix and pathetic LECTURE on GOD.

Is not the insect world a peculiar and amazing part of the creation? How numerous are the species! The most numerous class of all the animal world, Ray thinks 20,000 kinds. He found near 200 kinds near Braintree, in Essex. And how various their manner of life! how curious the shape of their bodies! how great the number of their parts! what surprising minuteness! and how delicate the finery of their dress! what glowing colours! what curious carving! what rich embroidery! what nice enamelling! what splendor of gold and silver! what diamonds, pearls, and all manner of precious stones, garnish their cloathing! what scarlet, blue, green, yellow, violet,

violet, of the richest dyes! here is scarlet in grain, sky-blue, Saxon-green, and every other colour and ornament! What lady's dress, what monarch's robe, can compare with the beauties of an insect? How keen their sensations! how piercing their sagacity! how swift their motions! how quick the vibrations of their wings! what amazing transformations do they undergo! see their egg! the worm or maggot produced! their state of inaction or seeming death in an enamelled case! How rich are the cloaths of an insect-fly in it's glory and perfection! what an assemblage of jewels are studded on the back and wings! what an astonishing profusion of ornaments! gold, and pearls, azure, green, and vermillion, of the richest dyes! Do they not outvie the grandest lady, or the richest monarch in the world?

XV. REPTILES and SERPENTS demonstrate the all-wise GOD.

Are not their forms various? Is not the motion of some kinds by legs and feet? of others by feet without legs? Do not others creep in a worm-like manner, without legs or feet? Are not the movements of the Centipee, or hundred feet, most stupendous! What consent in all the motions of these numerous feet? What dost thou think of the serpent kind? the manner of their life, and

their various food? How wise the contrivance of God's providence in assigning their proper dwellings, and preventing their hurting his noble creature man! How amazing are the forethoughts of God! His attention to his offspring man appears in the formation of that voracious reptile the Crocodile.

XVI. The NATURE and FORM of MAN wonderfully prove the EXISTENCE, PERFECTIONS, and PROVIDENCE of the most powerful and glorious GOD.

Consider the parts and structure of his body! Is not the body of man the noblest piece of animal mechanism possible in nature? Does it not really transcend the power and thought of man to imagine any form or structure more perfect, more elegant, more grand, and commodious? What do you judge of man's erect posture? his beauteous shape? his proper stature? the structure and accuracy of the parts? the fitness of every part to its office and end? How marvellous the harmony and consent of every member to the whole frame! what sparkling brightness in the eyes! what sweet melody in the voice! how quick the ears to receive all manner of sounds! how nicely adjusted are the palate and taste to all sorts of foods! what a noble instrument is the tongue! Hence speech and eloquence, oratory and persuasion.

suasion. What wonders appear in the hand of man! its formation, and its astonishing variety of uses! what majesty in the face! how immensely various are the countenances of men! what an endless difference in the voices and hand-writing of men!

What a striking proof of God in the soul of man! How much of God appears here! what an amazing and irresistible evidence of God is discovered in a soul! The soul of man is a shining argument to demonstrate the being and presence of an infinite God.

The powers of man's mind shew him to be almost a divine existence. He thinks—he is conscious of internal acts—he forms ideas of all things—he reasons on his thoughts—he perceives an infinite variety of objects—he reflects on these images of things in his mind—he recollects his thoughts, and surveys their agreement with objects, and their difference from each other—he brings all past ages and time present to his mind, and views the transactions of men, and revolutions of empires for thousands of years—he can recollect a thousand, ten thousands, a million of facts almost at once—or he makes them pass in a quick succession before the eyes of his mind—he marks the different nature and tendency of men's actions—sees how one kind have a direct influence
upon

upon his peace and happiness, while another issue in ruin, devastation, and death.

He commands the future time to the present view of his vast and mighty mind ; looks into future years and ages ; foretels the consequences of actions to individuals, and to the societies of men ; penetrates the dark veil of future ages, and dives into the conditions of the human nature for ten thousand years to come, yea for ten thousand millions in hell and heaven.

He pursues a mental tour round the earth, and ranges in his thoughts all over the skies ; he roves from planet to planet, from sun to sun, from world to world, almost to infinity ! he views one system of worlds after another with infinite speed and velocity ; and after all can form in his imagination, and grasp in his thoughts, millions of worlds more than ever existed.

He sees the eternal difference between moral good and evil ; and in spite of pride, in spite of hell, is forced to confess the beauty of the one, and the deformity of the other ; the destructive consequences of vice, and the infinite advantages and transcendent joys of virtue.

He feels in his frame a *social* principle ; and, in spite of all his selfishness, he cannot but love society. He flies from solitude, and delights in the converse of his fellow men. In society we attain the
utmost

utmost distinction and destination of our nature. We give free scope to our reasoning powers, and arrive at the full perfection of our most excellent passions and faculties.

Ever-present and ever-active God! thou fillest all worlds with thy presence, and thine energy works quite through all the systems which thy hands have formed; the infinitely active force of thy will penetrates our globe, and all the planets to their very centres. The original laws of the universe have no influence separated from thy presence and almighty power. Thine energy, O GOD! penetrates every moment to the very centre of the sun, and all his blazing beams and glories are borrowed from thy superior radiance. Thine incessant and immense fulness feeds his fires, and maintains him in his full splendor, without decay. His universal influence is but a feeble resemblance of thine omnipresence and inexhausted beneficence!

The planetary worlds are suspended by thine ever-present agency in universal space—their opposite, but useful forces, are impressed upon them by thy Hand; they perform their stated revolutions with the utmost punctuality to a moment, under the inspection and guidance of thy perfect wisdom and unerring skill.

The fixed stars, those essential flames, and centres of worlds innumerable, were all produced
by

by the infinite activity of thy will, and thine immensely fruitful goodness; their prodigious and unmeasurable bulk is the production of thy power; and their innate fires, and immaculate brightness, are derived from that God, who is purer than the unstained light, and brighter than ten thousand suns. Thou art light, and in thee, O my God, there is no darkness at all!

How great is the resemblance of the human soul to God!

His existence and omnipresent agency is clearly seen in the human soul. The existence of the soul proclaims the existence of God. The invisibility of the soul demonstrates the invisible God. The vast stretch of our thoughts and imaginations evinces his omnipresence—the incorruptibility of the soul proclaims the immortality of God—the vastness of our desires evinces his eternity and immense goodness—the vigorous and keen perceptions and foreknowledge of our souls, declare the infinite prescience, forethought, knowledge, and wisdom of God—the native benevolence of a soul evinces the unbounded generosity of the Deity; and the consciousness of shame and pain when we think a bad thought, or do a mean or bad action, evinces his essential justice—the dominion of the soul over the body represents the dominion of God
over

over the world—the prudence and forethought of man to provide against future wants and dangers, declare God's universal and actual providence.

Great God! what a lively image is a human spirit of thine essential glories and perfections!

NATURAL DUTIES to GOD the FOUNTAIN of
the UNIVERSE.

I. ADMIRATION of GOD.

Admiration is that sudden surprise at the novelty and grandeur of an object, by which the soul is fastened down to the contemplation of it. It is a sensible, agreeable, and respectful emotion of the soul arising from the sight of a new or grand object, suited to excite that commotion.

Religion itself is in a great measure bred by admiration; for what is it imprints on the mind that belief and reverence of a divine Being, but an admiring view of his works? All things are full of God. The creation is nothing else but a mass of wonders; all proclaiming the wisdom of the Deity in forming them, and the wisdom of man in adoring him upon that account. With how much reason does Adam, from the contemplation of the surprising scene around him, rise to noble acknowledgment and veneration of the boundless perfection of the great Creator!

“These are thy glorious works, parent of good!

“Almighty! thine this universal frame;

Vol. I.

D

“Thus,

" Thus, wond'rous fair ; thyself how wond'rous
 " then !

" Unspeakable ! who sitt'st above these heavens,

" To us invisible, or dimly seen

" In these thy lowest works ; yet these declare

" Thy goodness beyond thought, and power

" divine." Parad. Lost, b. V. 152.

2. LOVE to GOD.

Love is the gravitation or weight of the soul towards good, arising from a sense and preception of that good, and its suitableness to give us pleasure, or its agreement with its faculties and taste. Esteem is a simple thought that the object is beautiful, and fit to do us good. Desire is a simple tendency or bearing of the heart towards good. Desire being a most vigorous and sprightly principle, is the original of diligence and activity. All the powers of nature without this would be asleep, and the most charming objects be unable to provoke us to pursue them. The motion of the heart, in strong desires, is extremely vehement ; and from the heart great forces of spirits are detached to the several members of the body, which dispose a man for action, and give a briskness and chearfulness to his endeavours. Benevolence is the wishing the good desired to some being or other, who is capable of receiving that good. Love to God includes a clear knowledge of his fitness to do us good—an earnest desire of a deep

deep interest in his love—a free fixed inclination of the will towards him—an intense emotion of the heart after him—an union of all our powers in his service—and a resting of the will in him, considered as the chiefest good.

3. VENERATION and FEAR of GOD.

Veneration is an esteem of some free agent, as in a capacity of being beneficial or hurtful to us, joined with a desire of subjecting ourselves to him.

The veneration of God's name consists in this; that we religiously forbear the trifling and dishonourable use of his name, and use it seriously and reverently, as often as we do so at all; that is, so far as possible with an actual sense of God upon our minds, and always with that gravity and composure in our words and behaviour, which is a known token of reverence, and proper to intimate our real persuasion of heart, and inward sense of the being, presence, and excellence of God, as well as with an intention to promote this deep sense of God in ourselves and others. And these expressions and intentions must bear a proportion to the occasion and circumstances wherein the venerable name of God is used.

Fear of God is a lively sense of God's infinite capacity to communicate to us the greatest good and happiness, or inflict upon us the most terrible and lasting evils and misery: fear is a painful apprehension of danger.

Fear in general is that passion of our nature, whereby we are excited to provide for our security upon the approach of evil. God seems to have intimated the use of this passion in every motion of our natural fears. Our natural fears are either sudden or deliberate : the sudden are such as come upon us surprisingly, and without deliberation. But, how unreasonable soever, they carry a most reasonable admonition along with them ; and, upon each of their surprisng motions, seem to whisper : " Thus it is that man ought to fear God." Our deliberate fears are just to the same intimation, and, in each of their motions, point out God to the first glances of our reason : for if it be reasonable to fear want, how much more reasonable is it to fear Him, whose bounty is the fountain of all our supplies !

Reverence, as it is the disposition of rational, but at the same time frail and sinful creatures, towards the supreme all-perfect Creator, is made up of esteem and fear ; of the most exalted esteem of his infinite excellencies, and a deep sense of our own meanness and sinfulness, compared with his majesty and purity ; a fear of incurring his displeasure, by an unsuitable temper and conduct.

4. TRUST and DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

Dependence is a feeling sense and conviction, that we are at the disposal and direction of GOD, and subject to change for the better or the worse

at

at his pleasure: or it is a deep conviction, that all good is from God, and all our happiness in his power.

To trust in any person, or intelligent agent, is to expect good from his benevolence or kind affections: in order to which, there must not only be a persuasion of his good dispositions, but of his all-sufficient power.

Trust consists in a chearful hope of being provided for, and made happy by God, in a way of well-doing, and a firm confidence in his unfailing power, wisdom, and goodness, and his perfectly wise and good government.

The expectation of the performance of our desire, is that we call dependence upon God for help and assistance.

5. RESIGNATION to GOD.

A ready submission to the will of God, and a chearful resignation to his dispensations, are other branches of a religious temper, springing from the same root. As the will of God is the will of him who gave us our being, all our powers of action, and faculties of enjoyment, the world, and every good thing we possess, it is plain he has a right to direct the exercise of what is properly his own; and we are, both by justice and gratitude, bound to obey him in the practice of whatever, by our reason, or any other way, he shews

us to be his will. The will of God is the will of the wisest and most benevolent being.

6. WORSHIP and PRAISE of GOD.

Religious worship is an acknowledgment, veneration, and love of all God's infinite excellencies and perfections, according to the divine will and appointment, and not according to the will and fancy of the worshipper. Worship is an act of the understanding and will, an act of the soul applying itself to the knowledge of the excellence of God, and entertaining actual thoughts of his glorious majesty, recollecting, with the utmost veneration and delight, his transcendent attributes, as the supreme Lord and Governor of the world; which is natural knowledge: beholding the glory of his perfections, as the generous benefactor and judge of the whole creation.

Natural worship is an acknowledgment or expression of the veneration, honour, and esteem, which are due to God; and that on account of the infinite perfections of his nature, which are the only foundation for it. The relation we stand in to him, with our dependence upon him, receipts and expectations from him, are the motives and obligations to it. Praise consists in an expression of our inward sense of the infinite propensity of God's nature to make us happy with delight: by conferring on us all those blessings
that

that are suited to refine and ennoble our natures, and raise us to the highest pitch of perfection and felicity.

7. ZEAL for the GLORY of GOD as the ultimate
END OF OUR EXISTENCE.

Zeal is a mixed passion, composed of grief and anger, and fervent love and desire; for what a man loves earnestly, he is careful to see honoured, and grieved to see it dishonoured. It is an eagerness in pursuing good things, when the end and manner of acting is good.

Zeal consists in a just and deep regard to the nature, and character, and glories of God, felt in the heart, and shewn in the uniform tenor of our words and actions.

Zeal will prompt us to confess all the sins we have committed, and take shame to ourselves for all our deviations from the rectitude, beauty, and goodness of God, and the rules of virtue. To delight in the beauty and goodness of God above all things, esteeming him above all treasures and pleasures, committing all our cares and concerns, both of life and death, into his hands. Fervent zeal will excite us to defend the honour of his perfections, when they are denied or degraded by the tongues or the actions of atheists and rebels, deists and socinians, who set themselves against him.

Zeal

Zeal will farther stimulate us to improve all our talents of nature and science, of power and wealth, of reputation and interest, for God's honour; producing the fruits of light, truth, and virtue, in proportion to the excellencies of our faculties, and the advantages we enjoy.

True zeal will lead us farther to honour God by humility, deep humility, in acknowledging our infinite distance from him, our guiltiness before him, and dependence upon him; by thankfulness, in setting a due value on all God's blessings of nature and providence, expressing a deep sense of the worth of health, wealth, and wisdom; by cheerfulness before God, recommending the pleasure of his service as most agreeable to our faculties, most suited to our taste, and most happily promotive of our noblest interest; avowing, in the face of the whole world, that all God's paths are full of rational and solid satisfaction; and that we are so far from repenting of our obedience to his order and constitution, that we regard it as the highest advancement of our natures, and consider the imitation of his supreme and essential goodness as our utmost delight and glory.

A
CONTEMPLATION
ON THE
IMMORTALITY, POWERS, AND AFFECTIONS
OF THE
HUMAN SOUL;
AS AN IMAGE OF THE
KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM, POWER,
AND IMMORTALITY OF GOD.

Vol. I.

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CONTEMPORATION

IMMORTALITY, POWERS, AND AFFECTIONS



H. U. M.

KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM, POWER,
AND IMMORTALITY OF GOD.

A CONTEMPLATION, &c.

AS the soul of man is a most glorious evidence of the existence and attributes of God, it will be instructive and useful to enter into farther views and considerations of the NATURE, POWERS, AFFECTIONS, QUALITIES, and IMMORTALITY of the soul. These views will enlarge our prospects of the wonderful perfections of God, and dispose us to pay a greater attention to the necessity and excellence of divine revelation.

A REPRESENTATION of the SOUL,

In its essence, powers, affections, moral qualities, resemblance to God, and its immortality.

The soul of man, considered as a spiritual being, is a most simple and immutable essence, having no kind of composition in its nature, and incapable of being changed in its substance.

Its ESSENCE is void of all matter, having no solid extension or divisibility of parts; it is essential to the nature of the soul to be active. Life, power, and thought, are the very nature and essence of the soul. The life of the soul is its state of active rational existence.

In its **POWERS**, as a rational spirit, we may consider its understanding ; hence knowledge or science : we consider its will or self-determining power ; hence the amazing dominion of the will over the body, and its various actions.

In its **AFFECTIONS**, or sensible commotions, arising from the perception of objects appearing new or great, good or evil ; with the circumstances of good or evil considered as present or absent, possible or impossible, probable or improbable ; which affections are called primitive or derivative.

In the **MORAL QUALITIES** of the soul ; such are wisdom, goodness, holiness, justice, sincerity, humility, meekness, integrity.

The **IMMORTALITY** of the **SOUL** demonstrated on the **PRINCIPLES** of **REASON**.

The proof of the immortality of the soul must be acceptable to all who have not made it their interest, that the soul should be mortal, or at least think it their interest that it should be so.

To the proof of its immortality by reason, Mr. Henry Grove premises,* 1. Incorruptibility expresses not the whole idea of immortality ; which is an endless progression or continuance in life : what never had life as a mathematical or physical point, without parts or pores : or what has had

life,

* In his admirable **PNEUMATOLOGY** MS.

life, and lost it; but the substance still remaining may be incorruptible. Incorruptibility is therefore but a step towards the proof of immortality.

2. The life of a spiritual being is placed in thinking, either in the faculty of it, which is radical life; or the act of it, which is actual life. If there be a latent principle, which, when all restraints are taken away, will exert itself, there is what may be called life, though not in act: if it was actually dead, it could never of itself return again to action or life.

3. Philosophically speaking, there is a difference between DEATH and ANNIHILATION. The latter is the extinction of the substance. Death is only the privation of a quality or attribute of a being; the substance remaining safe: for otherwise, supposing any created being essentially endowed with life, God cannot destroy the life without, at the same time, destroying the substance or being.

4. The nature of the soul is so peculiar, that it will continue in life, notwithstanding all the jars and rencounters or clashing of second causes. God can divest the soul of actual cogitation; and if he could take away the power of thinking (which cannot be conceived) and the substance remain, the soul would be naturally immortal, and

and no force of finite beings can deprive it of life, it having a defence in its own nature against the most violent attacks.

5. If some of the proofs alledged for the soul's immortality do not directly and fully evince its never dying; if they conclude for a future state, and the soul survives the body; and is rewarded or punished, in a future world, for an indefinite length of time; we shall then easily admit the future state to be eternal: this will follow almost of course upon the other.

Now for the proofs on the principles of reason alone.*

I. The soul is naturally immortal, and therefore will be actually so.

What is essentially indivisible can receive no alteration in its properties from finite causes: notwithstanding all which, as it remains the same individual, so the same thinking substance as ever. All change, by collision of bodies, is made by a change of the substance itself; which, having its parts differently ranged, puts on new qualities: now it is to our thought impossible, that any such change should befall an indivisible substance as would infer a change in its powers, unless made by omnipotence itself; nay, if the thinking

* We shall give no evidences of the immortality of the soul from scripture, till its inspiration and divine authority shall be demonstrated.

thinking faculty be essential, as may be made appear to be highly probable, the soul must continue one thinking substance to eternity; and, if thus naturally immortal, we may conclude actually so. We cannot suppose God will annihilate the soul: for, though bodies are changed many ways, yet they are not annihilated; and spirits being far more excellent, if God could take away the life of the soul without annihilation, we cannot suppose he would, because it does not seem to be for his glory. An organized living body displays much more of his skill and power than a lump of undigested earth: and a thinking substance is capable of glorifying him much more than an unthinking one; and therefore he will not, without good reason, deprive it of thought, and reduce it to senseless inactivity. Though we see the most elegant structures of matter, displaying much beauty and art, dissolved and come to ruin, there is not the same reason for any thing of the like nature respecting spirits. When an organized body falls to pieces, the matter of it does not become useless, but goes to make up other bodies, and so the world is preserved: but if an immaterial being be divested of thought, it cannot make another, or part of another, such being: for the substance being one, and invariable, if it be endowed with thought, it must become the same again that it was before; we can, therefore,

therefore, see no good reason why God should put a period to the life of the soul: he has fitted it for an endless life, and therefore designs it for such a state. We may reasonably conclude God, in creating it, designed it for such an end, for which it is manifestly fitted.

II. There is in MAN a DESIRE OF IMMORTALITY.

And this is universal, so that a man cannot extinguish it. The despairing wretch, who flies to death, and hopes for annihilation, at that time dreads an immortality which he suspects will be miserable: he wishes he had no reason to chuse a loss of being, which is a proof he has not put off the general desire of immortality. The most powerful enemies of an immaterial, immortal soul, cannot shift off this desire, but only change its object. Thus, Epicurus was willing his name should survive, and, when dying, hoped for immortality in his philosophical works. So his disciple Horace, hopes in his poems—*Non omnis moriar; multaque pars mei, vitabit libitinam.**—Thus, instead of real immortality, they covet an empty name; and this desire is not only universal, but strictly natural, and therefore from God, who made it to be gratified; and, if not, would imply a defect in the divine power or goodness. If it be said such a desire has a necessary connexion with the rational faculty, and a principle

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* Lib. III. Ode xxx. Line 6.

of self-love; for the same reason as man wills his present existence, he must therefore desire immortality; but this desire may be where it was not designed by God, and then he is not obliged to gratify it. Dr. Sherlock says, this desire must prove the soul immortal, else the very frame of its nature cheats it into fond hopes of immortality: but it may be replied, hope is a mixture of desire and belief; and if, from desire, we proceed to the belief of that immortality, we may delude ourselves, but have no cause to complain of our maker as imposing upon us: but then it may be further urged, either this desire rises necessarily out of the reason of things, and independently of the will of God, or it does not? if it does not, it was made a part of our nature by God, when he might have withheld it; if he interwove it in our frame, 'tis highly probable he designed to answer it, because putting it into us may be thought a tacit promise; for a desire, without a reason to hope for it, would but torment the mind. If it be a necessary consequent of the nature of things, God cannot but approve it, and, therefore, has provided an object for a desire so conformable to his will.

III. The soul's IMMORTALITY may be proved from the universal HARMONY and AGREEMENT of MANKIND in the BELIEF of it.

Tully compares this argument with that for the existence of God, fetched from the same

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antiquity

antiquity and universal consent of nations, who have nothing common between them but the same nature, which shews what is truly nature. If it be said this belief flows from tradition, it may be asked, how this tradition began? if from a treaty between the several clans of mankind, who managed it? and how was it carried on and perfected? If it was from one particular source, there must have been one first man created, who cannot be supposed to have set such a notion on foot without the direction of his maker: or suppose such a tradition began how you please, if there was nothing in human nature to countenance it, but left to support itself by its own power, it must have been very short lived. We give much (says Seneca) to the presumption of all men. Many testimonies may be produced from the Chaldeans, Grecians, Pythagoreans, Stoicks, Platonists, &c. of their belief of the immortality of the soul; and the savage Indians are also persuaded of it. Now, that which gains the universal assent of all tempers, capacities, and nations, (some few particular atheists excepted) must arise from nature, or the strongest natural arguments.

IV. According to the present FRAME of HUMAN NATURE, a BELIEF of a future STATE is absolutely necessary to the PEACE of the WORLD; and a contrary OPINION generally prevailing, would

would make MAN the most irregular and unhappy of all BEINGS.

The doctrine of the soul's immortality being universally rejected, bad men would be worse than they are; and many, who are *now* in the interest of virtue, sobriety, justice, and honour, would appear *then* to put on another character. Many things may be done, known only to our consciences; and, on the account of which, we are in no danger from creatures: and if you set aside a future reckoning, the terrors of conscience vanish, and its convictions will not long subsist. Without the belief of a future state, there would be no sufficient restraint from the worst of actions, nor an effectual incentive to great and generous ones: besides, man possesseth with a belief that he has nothing to hope for beyond this life, would be most unhappy—reason would not be a privilege, but a torment. Brute creatures, who either think not at all, or have their whole attention confined to present sensation, suffer death without fearing it: let them be free from pain, and they enjoy life to its last moment; but man is otherwise formed; he knows he must die, and if that extinguish his being, he can never be happy, because the thoughts of death will spread a gloom over all present enjoyments. They live like brutes who say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;" and the thoughts of death

will be apt to make their wine flat and sour—
Quid possit esse lætum, exitum suum cogitantibus,
 says Cicero. Then as to good men, if, in this
 life only, they had hope, the more virtuous and
 good, and the greater prospects they had beyond
 death, the more miserable they would be. It
 may therefore be asked, whether God would or
 would not have mankind to believe there is a
 future state? if he would, then they that endea-
 vour to persuade the world there is none, fight
 against God; and this his will proves a future state.
 The God of truth can be no friend to falsehood—
 he cannot need it to govern the world by imagi-
 nary terrors and delusive hopes—it is a thought
 unworthy of God. If he would not have man
 to believe a future state, then why is the matter so
 contrived, that men naturally fall into this belief?
 Why should all nations and ages conspire in the
 same creed, and, the further they advance in
 reasoning, see, or think they see, more reason for
 this belief? Why are the probabilities so great?
 Why is the bias of human nature this way so
 strong? It seems therefore, that they who oppose
 the immortality of the soul, are either inconsistent
 in their notions, or are infidels as to the existence
 of a God of all perfection, (moral as well as in-
 tellectual) the creator, governor, and judge of
 the world.

But how excellent is christianity which ratifies
 the belief, clears the notion, and exalts the hope
 of

of immortality? Without revelation, it must be confessed, the prospect of the wisest is somewhat cloudy, and the expectation of the best not without a mixture of doubts and fears; but the good christian, besides the most rational and glorious idea of a future life, is peculiarly happy in that he has every thing to hope for, and nothing to fear. How absurd are men's prejudices against such a religion?*

But the demonstrations of the immortality of the soul, drawn from divine revelation, will be considered at large in another part of our work; at present we confine ourselves to the discoveries of reason alone.

V. THE MORAL PERFECTIONS of GOD furnish an invincible DEMONSTRATION of the IMMORTALITY of the SOUL.

GOD *is a wise being*---and his wisdom consists in the strength of his understanding, to judge of the nature of ends and means; and in the prudent use of the best means to attain the noblest ends. Now it is impossible to vindicate and clear up the wisdom of God, if we assert and believe the soul to be mortal and perish for ever---human nature was made in vain: and present life is so short and wretched; and the powers of the soul so imperfect on the one hand, and the desires so boundless on the other, that man is a strange and unaccountable

* Thus far Mr. Grove's MS.

table structure, made for no glorious purpose, and quite a reproach to his maker's wisdom and prudence: in a word, the argument must come to this issue---man is immortal, or God is not wise; or if God is infinitely wise, man must be made for an eternal existence in another world.

God is a good being. The goodness of God consists in his kind affection, or an ardent desire to diffuse happiness far and wide through the worlds of his creatures.---This inclination is natural to God: he delights in the communications of his bounty, and it is the joy of his heart to add every moment to the sum of happiness in the universe. Now to suppose, that all the past generations of mankind are entirely dissolved into dust and ashes---to suppose and assert that the present generation of men on the face of the earth, who are at least three hundred millions---all perish like the beasts of the field, is a thought that shocks the common sense and reason of the whole world---'tis a reproach to the moral character of God, a God of perfect goodness and beneficence; and I dare aver, that 'tis impossible to vindicate or demonstrate the immense goodness of God, if we suppose the soul of man to be mortal. In a word, if God is infinitely good, man is immortal: if the soul of man is mortal, and perishes with the body, God is not infinitely good. 'Tis in vain to say, God may raise the
body

body and soul from the state of the dead, because reason alone knows nothing of the resurrection of the body; it cannot start one thought concerning it: and 'tis remarkable, that all our infidels, who deny revelation, and hold the mortality of the soul, laugh at the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; nor do I know of a single instance to the contrary in the whole world.

God *is a holy being*. Holiness is the life and beauty of God: 'tis the rectitude of the divine will. God has the most lively sense of the beauty and dignity of his own moral character, and the highest complacency in the righteousness and goodness of his own nature: he knows himself to be the worthiest of all beings; and he is invariably determined to think nothing, to say nothing, to do nothing, that is unworthy of himself. We may dare to aver, that if God had made all mankind to perish like beasts, he would have acted unworthy of himself: he must have been conscious to himself, that to create man with such wonderful powers and infinite desires after a boundless good: and then to defeat those desires, and disappoint the expectations of the most virtuous men in the world, would be a conduct reproachful to his perfections and moral character. In a word, if God is holy, man is immortal: if man's soul is mortal, God is not holy: he has no claim to absolute rectitude and
infinite

infinite perfections. 'Tis impossible to vindicate the holiness of God on the supposition that the soul totally perishes with the body: I am so confident of the conclusive force of this argument, that I am not afraid to challenge all the infidels of the age to overthrow it. If any men of the sceptical and atheistical tribe were ever able to do it, they must be the grand champions of the party; I mean Voltaire, lord Bolingbroke, Rousseau, and David Hume, lately deceased. I hear that this last hero has left in charge with his executors, to publish an essay in defence of Self-Murder, and against the Immortality of the Soul. I could wish, for the sake of the giddy throng of unthinking young people, this manuscript might never be published: but, however, God be praised, the friends of immortality are prepared for his utmost attacks: for our own parts, we fear him not---we can, by the divine assistance, produce such evidences from the common sense and reason of mankind, and the moral perfections and rational government of God, as shall triumph over all scepticism and sophistry; and give fresh life and spirit to our hopes of an eternity of happiness beyond the grave.

God is a just being. God's justice is the ardent inclination of his will to make fit laws for the government of his rational creatures, and his inflexible determination to punish the wicked and reward

reward the good.—Now 'tis impossible to evince, that God is just, on the principle that all souls perish like beasts, at the death of the body. On this mad hypothesis, that all souls perish, or lose their existence at the time of our natural death, —'tis impossible to demonstrate that God has any justice in him. Nay, this assertion draws after it consequences that go very deep into every perfection, and even the being of a God: for, supposing the soul not immortal, all the wicked men in the world can set God at defiance, triumph over him, and dare him to his face; nay, farther, they can, in a moment, destroy the best men in the world, and put it out of God's power, in the usual course and order of nature, to reward the purest virtue and the best actions that ever existed in our world. And more horrid still doth this atheistic notion appear, when we consider that every bad man in the world can treat his maker with scorn, disdain his frowns, and defy his power to punish according to the common course of nature. After the perpetration of the blackest crimes of blasphemy, perjury, lewdness, and murder, he can, in a minute, take himself out of his maker's resentment and dominion; and, by a pistol, an halter, or poison, set God at defiance. How absurd and detestable is this notion of the soul's mortality, and how ought the authors of it to be treated with abhorrence and scorn by all the wisest and best beings in the universe!

God is a sincere and faithful being. Sincerity is the truth of his heart. Veracity is the truth of his mouth. Faithfulness is the truth of his actions.—To suppose that God governs the world by a lye, is the most shocking absurdity! it grates upon the common sense of mankind, and can never be believed by any sensible and honest mind.

'Tis impossible to prove that God is a sincere being, on the principle that the soul is mortal. So that things must come to this issue:—if God be true, the soul is immortal; or, if the soul be mortal, God is a false being: he himself has deceived us. Who can think of this without astonishment and horror in their utmost extremes.—And now, my dear reader, let us sum up the evidence produced for the immortality of the soul, and then judge impartially, in the fear of God, whether the arguments are conclusive or not.

We have considered, “ That the soul is naturally immortal; and therefore will be actually so.”—That there is in man a desire of immortality; and this desire is universal and unconquerable, so that a man cannot extinguish it.—That the soul’s immortality may be evinced, from the universal agreement of mankind in the belief of it, equally with the existence of a God.—That, according to the present frame of human nature,

nature, a belief of a future state is absolutely necessary to the peace and order of the world: and a contrary opinion, universally prevailing, would make man the most irregular and mad, the most unhappy and detestable of all beings in the world.—We have further produced the wisdom, goodness, holiness, justice, and sincerity of God, as striking evidences of the immortality of the soul. And we have shewn, that it can no ways be demonstrated that God is a wise being; or good; or holy; or just; or sincere and faithful; if the souls of mankind are mortal, perishable with the body, and extinguished for ever. And I do again defy the bitterest infidel to overthrow this argument: it triumphs for ever with invincible and victorious power!

We have produced no testimonies from the Scriptures, because we are determined not to use them till their inspiration, or divine authority is demonstrated. We have argued on the principles of reason alone; and on the principles of reason we can vanquish our adversaries.

Now, my reader, I hope you are prepared to take a view of the wonderful powers and passions of the soul, and it's amazing resemblance to the omnipotence and wisdom of God.

VI. The

VI. The human SOUL is a most wonderful RESEMBLANCE of the almighty POWER, and the unbounded UNDERSTANDING of GOD.—This CONSIDERATION evinces its IMMORTALITY.

The self-existent God is much more and better resembled by the soul, or invisible part of man, than by any thing outward, material, or sensible in the whole world.

And the perfections of God may be more fully represented, and better understood, by being compared with the correspondent powers of the mind of man.

Let us consider the human soul with respect to God's attributes of power and wisdom, the perfection and infinitude of which we ascribe to the supreme and self-existent Being.

We shall find in man, not merely the effects of them, such as are displayed in all the parts of the creation, but likewise some image or resemblance of these attributes themselves, and a capacity in the soul to exercise these resemblances or likenesses of God's perfections in a wonderful manner and degree, though still limited to shew us our immediate and continual dependence on God's agency and pleasure.

I. The SOUL is an IMAGE of the OMNIPOTENCE of GOD.

1. The soul has a power of actuating the body,
though

though not seen by human eyes, or felt by the human hand.

Thus it resembles God, who actuates the earth and seas, the birds, beasts, fishes, and reptiles; the bodies of all mankind, and the planetary heavens every moment.

2. The soul of man has a power of moving, or not moving all or any part of the body at pleasure.

Thus it resembles God, who can move all or any part of the universe at his will; and though a thousand millions of men united could not move the globe of our earth one inch, yet God moves it a thousand miles every minute, and has done so every minute for near six thousand years.

3. The soul has a power of determining the motion of the body this way or that way, without being herself first moved or impelled by any outward force; that is, the soul has a power of beginning motion of itself, which is indeed a true, a real, a wonderful power, and such as no mere matter in the world ever had, or is capable of.

Thus the soul resembles God, who can begin motions in the visible world this way or that way, as he pleases.

Note, The mean motion between the swiftest body in our system, and the slowest body, or the
mean

mean motion of all the heavenly bodies taken together, is about fifty-two thousand miles every hour since the creation, five thousand seven hundred years ago. What an infinitely active force is there in this divine nature ! what an infinite life and ability in the divine will, to be able to produce for thousands of years, without the least fatigue, the most astonishing variety of effects in the starry heavens, and the earth and seas below !

4. The soul of man manifests an amazing dominion or sovereignty of power in willing, in chusing, or refusing, in acting freely, or without being acted upon by any external agent.

Thus it resembles the sovereign and absolute God, who wills, who chuses or refuses, who acts freely in creation, in providence, in the preservation of the natural and rational world, in the whole administration of his vast affairs, and in the bestowing of his favours without being impelled by any external force, constrained by any foreign power, or giving an account to men or angels of his behaviour and conduct towards the work of his hands.

II. The SOUL is an IMAGE of the OMNISCIENCE and WISDOM of GOD.

1. The soul has a power of reflecting upon itself, and surveying millions of its own ideas,
and

and the images which have been impressed upon it in the compass of fifty or seventy years, and it is capable of surveying ten thousand objects without itself.

No other creature below man is capable of this power of surveying its own existence, or the creation all round itself.

Thus the soul resembles the vast and capacious mind of God, who can reflect on his own infinite being, and all the immense treasures of his own ideas, at one and the same moment.

2. The soul of man hath a power of comparing ideas of all things in the visible world, and of reasoning and judging concerning past, present, and future things. The soul can bring up to its review and remembrance ten thousand facts and transactions in all past ages; to judge of the present state of all nations, and to foresee, with amazing sagacity, the future fates of empires, cities, and the individuals of mankind, for thousands of years to come.

Thus the soul resembles the boundless mind of God, which grasps, at one immense survey, all persons, things, actions, characters, in all worlds from eternity to eternity, in the vast depths of his understanding and knowledge, which is clear without darkness, distinct without confusion, infallible without doubt, easy without labour, has
pleasing

pleasing perceptions without pain, universal without limits or bounds.

3. The soul has a power of considering and proposing great and noble ends of life, and of acting always with some design or view of good and happiness.

An end is that for which a thing is done. Man always acts with a view to some end, and that end is either for some real or apparent good.

Man has a capacity of suiting means to ends, and thus the human soul is a resemblance of the understanding and wisdom of God.

God being the supreme immense eternal good, it is wise and beautiful in him to propose the complete discovery of his grandeur, and boundless perfections, as his highest end and design; and he has a prudence to suit and adapt the best means to this noble end of God.

4. The soul has a most surprising capacity to invent, contrive, improve, perfect, and beautify, many noble and liberal sciences, by considering the nature of causes and effects, and the dependencies of one thing upon another.

Thus it resembles the unbounded capacity of God, who grasps at once all the departments of knowledge, and penetrates to the very essences of all matter and spirit in the universe of being.

5. The

5. The soul hath a wonderful liveliness and rapidity of thought, and keenness of apprehension, on a thousand occasions.

It has an amazing power of flying from world to world, through the boundless empire of God.

It can represent to itself in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, things at an infinite distance through all worlds, as if they were present to the very essence of the soul; and this it can do without the least trouble of local motion, even so much as an inch of space. No creature, except an angel, is capable of this astonishing rapidity of thought, and this striking resemblance to God.

6. The soul has a glorious power and capacity of forming to itself new regions and empires of knowledge, and creating new worlds of thought, which have no other existence but in the soul itself.

It is capable of producing many useful axioms or self-evident truths, solid maxims of wisdom, and noble theorems in science, in morals, and religion.

It is possessed of such bright intelligence as to be capable of perceiving, with intuitive rapidity, the self-evidence of many speculative truths, and discerning the self-evidence of many practical truths, demonstrating sublime theorems or speculative propositions, and solving, with piercing and

keen sagacity, many demonstrable practical propositions, and of shewing how such or such truths flow from a demonstration in so easy and clear a manner, as to discover its dependence upon the proposition, whence it is deduced, almost as soon as proposed and put into words.

Thus the soul is an image of God, who has the universal system of truth in the grasp of his infinite understanding.

These astonishing and noble perfections, with many others, are the properties of a human soul, which shew it to be an intelligent and spiritual being, of a nature quite different from that of matter, however modified or put into motion.

Could the blind shuffles of dead matter, however put into the most violent and rapid motion, ever produce the glorious effects of intelligence and thought?

Could a heap of sand in motion ever produce Euclid's problems and theorems in geometry?

Could a pile of ashes, put into rapid motion, ever produce Homer's *Iliad*, or Virgil's *Pastorals* and *Æneid*?

Could any refined animal spirits ever produce the copious and charming orations of Cicero, or the amazing energy and irresistible eloquence of Demosthenes?

Could

Could a mountain of dust, in a violent whirl, compose Milton's Paradise lost?

Could a prodigious whirlwind, or a vessel full of the most volatile and rectified spirits, ever compose Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematic Principles of Philosophy, or Mr. Locke's excellent Essay on the Human Understanding? Who can believe these monstrous absurdities, unless he be a stupid fool, a drivelling ideot, or downright raving madman?

VII. A distinct and extensive VIEW of the POWERS and AFFECTIONS of the SOUL, will farther evince its IMMORTALITY.

I. UNDERSTANDING.

This is called by different names, viz.

Common sense, or that power which perceives truth by a sudden impulse, independent of our will, according to an established law; and therefore called sense: and acting, in the same manner, upon all men, in all ages and nations of the world; and therefore called common sense.

Intelligence is a power of perceiving, in an instant, the self-evidence of any truth proposed to the soul.

Intelligence relates chiefly to those axioms, or truths, which carry their own evidence with them, and admit of no doubt: they cannot be proved,

H 2 because

because nothing is more clear and certain: they cannot be denied, because their own evidence is so bright and convincing, that as soon as the terms or words are understood, the mind assents, and is forced to own their truth.

This intelligence, or common sense, is the grand criterion of truth. For our own intuitive and self-evident perceptions, are the ultimate foundation on which all our reasoning rests.

The understanding is only another name for common sense, or intelligence. It is the power of perceiving objects, or it is that faculty whereby the soul has the knowledge of the existence and nature of things.

The understanding, like the eye, gives information of all objects proposed to it.

The understanding, or perceptive faculty of the soul, may be considered in two modes; passive and active: passive, or a mere capacity of receiving ideas or images of things: active, or a power of contemplating and working upon the ideas received: thus it approaches to the next power of the soul, called,

II. REASON

Is the power of placing ideas together, and comparing them with each other, in order to see their agreement or difference, and to infer one thing

thing from another, and thus draw just conclusions from true and clear principles, that is, make fair deductions from solid axioms and self-evident truths.

DEMONSTRATION

Is the regular and beautiful process of reason, or in other words, it is a chain of clear reasoning, beginning from some plain and undoubted axiom, and regularly descending, by a close connexion of ideas, till you come at your conclusion.

III. JUDGMENT

Is a power of perceiving the relation or respect that one thing bears to another, and of distinguishing the propriety or impropriety of actions.

It is that power of the soul which passes sentence on things proposed to its examination, and determines what is right or wrong; and thus it approves or disapproves of an action, or an object, considered as true or false, fit or unfit, good or evil.

IV. MIND

Is a power of receiving instruction, and of application, by hard study, to attain knowledge.

The mind can reflect on things past, and hath a foresight of things to come in the natural and moral world.

The mind hath an admirable sagacity or acuteness

ness of discovery to see into future events, and to discern the happy or terrible consequences of tempers and actions, considered as morally good or evil.

The mind can foresee and forecast, or provide for things to come, and guard against many ruinous consequences by the acuteness of its powers in the discovery of truth.

V. CONSCIENCE

Is a power of discerning instantly moral good and evil in our tempers and actions.

Conscience is the knowledge which a man hath of his own internal actions with regard to the divine law, and a consciousness that God gives an attention to, and passes judgment on, the same actions.

A good conscience is soon alarmed, easily convinced, much concerned, hard to forgive itself.

When conscience performs its office with accuracy and exactness, it will accuse a man when he does wrong, and commend and applaud him when he does right; hence will arise peace of mind or dread of punishment in a moment: in a word, conscience is instead of ten thousand witnesses to the existence and justice of God.

VI. MEMORY

Is a power of retaining the facts, images, and words, we learn; and recollecting those facts,
and

and recalling them to mind on every needful occasion

When an idea, fact, image, expression, or word, arises in the mind, with a consciousness at the same instant of time that we have had this idea before, we are then said to remember it.

A good memory is ready to receive, and admit with ease, ideas, words, or facts: it is large and capacious to treasure up these words and facts in great number and variety: it is strong and durable to retain, for a considerable time, those ideas and facts committed to it: it is faithful and active to recollect and suggest upon every proper occasion, all those ideas, facts, images, and sentences, which have been trusted to its care, or treasured up in it.

VII. IMAGINATION

Is a power of recollecting and assembling images, and of painting forcibly those images on our own minds, or on the minds of others.

The original efficient cause of all innocent pleasures of the imagination, is God himself.

The final cause of our being pleased with what is great, is, that we may be excited to contemplate the greatest object in the universe, the being and perfections of God; and that he might give our souls a just relish of such a glorious contemplation, he has made them naturally susceptible
of

of delight in the apprehension of what is great and unlimited like God; such is the immensity of space, and the starry heavens, which are the temple and dwelling-place of God.

The final cause of the pleasures of the imagination in whatever is new, rare, or uncommon, is this :

God has annexed a secret pleasure to the idea of any thing that is new or rare, that he might encourage and stimulate us in eager and keen pursuits of knowledge, and inflame our best passions to search into the wonders of his creation and revelation : for every new idea brings such a pleasure along with it, as to reward any pains we have taken in its acquisition, and consequently serves as a striking and powerful motive to put us upon fresh discoveries in learning and science, as well as in the word and works of God.

BEAUTY is that quality in any object that excites
LOVE.

The final cause of beauty in the creation is to please and regale the imagination, and excite a rational love.

God has made such a boundless variety of objects appear beautiful, that he might render the whole creation more gay and delightful to our souls.

He

He has given almost every thing about us the power of raising an agreeable idea in the imagination.

So that it is almost impossible for us to behold his works with coldness and indifference, and to survey so many beauties of creation and revelation, without a secret satisfaction and complacency.

VIII. INVENTION

Is a power of the mind, which, on a sudden, with great sagacity and acuteness of discovery, finds out, on difficult and important occasions, useful thoughts, convincing arguments, bright images, and proper lively paintings of the passions; or, in other words,

Invention is a power of finding out language to instruct the mind, of displaying truth and evidence to convince the conscience, of discovering motives to persuade the will, and of painting images in a vivid manner, to please and allure the affections on all proper occasions, and in the most important and critical periods of our life.

IX. TASTE.

Taste is a power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of creation, the beauties of character, and virtuous and noble actions; and the beauties of history, eloquence, poetry, and divine revelation.

Taste is the exquisite sensibility of the soul to every fine impulse of beauty, truth, and goodness; this taste is wrought up to perfection and delicacy by education, study, and devotion, whereby the mind becomes able to discern, with an intuitive rapidity, how much true beauty and pleasure every object in heaven and earth can give us.

X. HUMAN WILL.

The will is a power of beginning motion in the soul, or in the body, or in other bodies round about us.

The will is that power whereby the soul labours to unite with, or avoid things, according as they are apprehended to be good or evil.

As the understanding, like the eye, gives information of objects; the will, like the feet or hands, pursues the object if it appears good, and flies from it if it appears evil: the will embraces the object if it appears beautiful, or guards against it if it appears deformed, and capable of doing us hurt.

The will is a power to chuse or refuse, to accept or reject, any object proposed to the senses or the understanding.

The will is a power to chuse any one thing, or the contrary, among several objects or things which are proposed to the senses or the reason, without any inward or outward restraint and force,

force, or constraining bias or influence; the objects appearing to the senses and the reason as true or false, good or evil, fit or unfit, beautiful or ugly, and likely to be followed with happy or miserable consequences.

LIBERTY of the WILL,

Consists in a power of delaying the execution of our desires, or suspending the acts of volition or choice, until the man has honestly examined on all sides what is best.*

THE PASSIONS of the SOUL.

The passions, or affections, are sensible commotions of our whole nature, soul and body, attended with pleasure or pain, occasioned by the perception of some object suited to excite such commotions.

An object new, vast, and agreeable, excites a sublime and pleasing commotion of the soul, and blood, and spirits; which emotion is styled,

I. ADMIRATION.

An object appearing to the senses or the mind as good, excites us to covet an union with the object; this is called,

II. LOVE.

* Such is the weakness of the will, the vicious fury of the appetites, and the strength of the mad fire of the great passions, that man will not stay to examine honestly what is best; he has no patience to examine diligently what is true or false, good or evil, fit or unfit, beautiful or ugly; or what actions will be followed by happy or dreadful consequences.

II. LOVE.

Love is a sensible commotion of the soul, blood, and spirits, and the force or impetus of the will towards an object considered as good.

Love is the motion of the soul, endeavouring an union with an object viewed as amiable and good.

Note, Beauty and goodness are those qualities in an object that excite love. Love, in its sublimest nature and degree, is the whole force of a good man's heart exerted in one mighty and pathetic desire towards God.

An object appearing evil to the senses or the mind, exciting a painful commotion and an aversion, or endeavour after disunion and flight from the object, is called,

III. HATRED.

Hatred is a painful aversion of the will to any object considered as evil and ugly, and capable of doing us some hurt or injury.

The perception of an object of worth and excellence, being good in itself, excites a pleasing emotion or act of respect, called,

IV. ESTEEM.

The perception of an object, considered as worthless, mean, little, vile, and unfit to do us any good, excites that act of the mind, called,

V. CONTEMPT.

V. CONTEMPT.

The perception of an object, as fit to receive good, as worthy to be honoured and happy, excites that free and forcible emotion called,

VI. BENEVOLENCE.

The perception of an object, as fit to receive hurt or ill-will, as deserving blame or misery, excites that painful emotion of our nature called,

VII. MALEVOLENCE OF ENVY.

Envy is a disposition of the heart to oppose and hurt the person, character, and welfare of another, considering that object as disagreeable to us, and hurtful to our interests.

Envy is a painful commotion of the heart, springing from hatred of a man's person, and sorrow at any honour or happiness he enjoys.

Self-love, and a desire of pre-eminence and a distinction above others, excites this painful passion called envy.

Envy is the most base, tormenting, and mischievous passion in men and devils; it makes a man to resemble the devil.

Envy grows out of violent self-love, and a corrupt desire of esteem and pre-eminence above others: this vehement passion for superior regard, rages more or less in all mankind; hence arises our envy at all men that we think stand in our way,

way, and eclipse our abilities and learning, or lessen our importance and honour.

Envy is a cursed plant that grows more or less in every heart.

This devil's temper, which frets at the peace, and honour and happiness of others, dwells particularly in learned men and authors, to the everlasting scandal of their character, genius, and accomplishments.

The perception of an object that appears agreeable, and which we can call our own, excites that pleasing emotion of the soul which we call,

VIII. COMPLACENCY OR DELIGHT.

It is an agreeable sensation arising in the mind, with sweet satisfaction and pleasure from the perception of an object appearing as good or beautiful, and which we have a deep interest in, so as to call it our own.

The perception of a disagreeable ugly object excites that painful emotion called,

IX. DISPLICENCE.

This painful commotion of our nature always arises from the apprehension of a disagreeable object, viz. an evil person, an evil action, or any bad quality in a rational agent.

The perception of an absent good object that is
suitable

suitable to make us happy and possible to us, excites that commotion in our nature called,

X. DESIRE.

This lively and forcible emotion towards some absent good, always arises from an apprehension that it is possible and suitable, and this produces that powerful tendency of the heart towards it.

The perception of an object, considered as evil, exciting in us an effort to turn away from it, is called,

XI. AVERSION.

This aversion is a lively and powerful effort of the will to turn away from such an object, or it is the speedy withdrawal of the will from an object, considered as evil, whether present or absent.

The perception of a possible or probable good, exciting a vivid desire and confident expectation of enjoying that good, is called,

XII. HOPE.

A desire of some absent good is a feeble hope; and a confident and vigorous expectation of absent good, is a strong and confirmed hope.

Hope is a sensible commotion of our nature, excited by the perception of some attainable good; and this expectation is enlivened with joy in proportion to the sense and persuasion we have of the probability of possessing the good we want.

If

If this expectation be strong and lively, it is always indulged with pleasure.

The perception of a great evil absent, but likely to come upon us, excites in us a violent and painful commotion of our whole nature, or a piercing disturbance of mind, called,

XIII. FEAR.

Fear is a painful apprehension of danger or evil, it is an uneasiness of mind upon the thought of future evil likely to befall us. If this fear rises high, it is called horror and terror; our sudden and surprising fears shew us, that "thus a man ought to fear God."

The perception of an happy event, or the enjoyment of a present good, or an assured approach of a future good, produces that pathetic commotion, or high sensation of pleasure, called,

XIV. JOY.

This is a pleasure of mind arising from a present good, or an assured approach of a future good, which will soon be in our possession, and be assuredly our own, to be freely and fully enjoyed for ever.

The perception of good lost, or the present pressures of evil, produce that painful commotion in our whole nature, which is called,

XV. SORROW.

Sorrow is a painful commotion of the mind arising

arising from some sad event: it is the deep pain of the mind upon the thought of a lost good which might have been longer enjoyed, or the distressing sensation of present evil, which might have been prevented or kept off, or very much diminished.

Despair is dreadful sorrow, without hope.

The perception of great benefits received, or great good bestowed upon us by an intelligent and voluntary agent, produces in us that forcible desire to make all the best returns in our power, called,

XVI. GRATITUDE.

Gratitude consists in a lively sense of good intentionally bestowed upon us; a high value of the gifts, and a fervent love to the giver, with a pathetic desire and purpose to make all the returns of love and service in our power for ever.

The perception of an hurtful object, or an object that intentionally doth some injury to us, excites that violent and painful commotion of the soul and body, which is called,

XVII. ANGER.

Anger is a sudden and uneasy emotion of the mind, on receiving some intentional hurt or injury.

It is a violent commotion of the whole soul, attended with piercing pain on our being hurt by any rational agent, with a present purpose of revenge.

A short and more pleasing VIEW of the PASSIONS
of the HUMAN SOUL.

We have already observed, that the word PASSION, taken in the sense we here use it, signifies that sensible commotion of our whole nature, attended with pleasure or pain, arising from the perception of an object, as good or evil, suited to excite that commotion.

The passions of the soul are conversant about objects new, or good, or evil.

I. An object may be considered as rare, new, uncommon; or as good or evil in the general; or as to the various kinds of good or evil; or as to the circumstances attending good or evil, as absent or present.

An object rare and new excites ADMIRATION. Sudden wonder is SURPRISE. Great wonder is ASTONISHMENT—this passion has no opposite.

If an object appear good, it excites LOVE: if an object appear evil, it excites HATRED. The above are primary passions.

II. As to the KINDS of GOOD and EVIL.

An object, as absolutely good, excites ESTEEM: in a very high degree, it is VENERATION: in a supreme degree, it is ADORATION.

If an object be viewed as worthless, it excites CONTEMPT, especially if that object be proposed as excellent.

excellent. If it be considered as fit to receive good, it is the object of BENEVOLENCE: if fit to receive evil, it is the object of MALEVOLENCE.

N. B. This passion terminates on sensible objects, viz. on objects capable of perception and reason.

If an object be considered as fit to do me good, or give me pleasure, it produces COMPLACENCY: if likely to do me evil, DISPLICENCY.

Complacency, in a very high degree, to an inferior, on considerations not equal to that degree of regard, is called FONDNESS. The opposite is DISGUST, or loathing.

III. PASSIONS arising from the various CIRCUMSTANCES of GOOD or EVIL, considered as present or absent.

1. FUTURE GOOD or EVIL. Good, considered as possible, excites DESIRE, which is the grand spring of action. If evil be viewed as possible, it excites AVERSION.

2. A probable view of absent good, excites HOPE: if evil be likely to come upon us, it produces FEAR.

The highest degree of hope is, confident expectation, or security: when little hope remains, there is despondency.

When hope is entirely banished, DESPAIR succeeds.

FEAR joined with foresight, is anxiety: with careful contrivance to avoid it, is sollicitude.

Fear mingled with surprise, and rising to a violent degree on a sudden, is TERROR: and fear rising into terror, mixed up with hatred of an object, is HORROR.

3. GOOD and EVIL, present with us. Present GOOD obtained, awakens joy. EVIL present, and felt, brings SORROW.

Moderate joy is gladness. Sudden and high joy is exultation. Habitual joy is cheerfulness.

Moderate sorrow is trouble. Great sorrow is distress and anguish. Habitual sorrow is melancholy.

Congratulation is the sentiment and expression of joy arising from another's happiness.

Pity and compassion is sorrow arising from the distress and misery of other men.

Sympathy comprehends compassion and sorrow.

ENVY is the opposite to sorrow and compassion: it is a painful emotion of the soul at the sight of another's good or honour.

JEALOUSY is a species of envy arising from a thought that there is preference given to another person in the love and affections of one, for whom we have a peculiar regard.

SHAME

SHAME is a species of sorrow, mixed with self-love and self-contempt, frequently attended with blushing; arising from a consciousness of any thing that appears matter of disgrace, or blame, or contempt, in ourselves or others.

It is a sorrow and self-contempt, when we have said or done any thing that is likely to expose us to the contempt or scorn of others.

Shame is a painful dread of contempt, arising from a consciousness that we deserve it.

4. When any intelligent being designedly brings good upon us, it excites GRATITUDE. If the good be conferred on us with peculiar difficulty to the giver, and with the most beautiful good will, it heightens the force of this gratitude.

Evil brought on us, excites ANGER. When an intelligent being designedly brings evil upon us, it excites anger towards the bad man, or the devil.

GRATITUDE is a mixture of complacency and benevolence.

ANGER is displicency, with some degree of malevolence.—Anger, rising to an excessive degree, is rage and fury.—Anger, deeply rooted, is rancour and spite.—Anger, arising on trifling occasions, and expressed in little tokens of resentment, is peevishness.—Anger, arising from an affront, offered by a person far beneath us, is

INDIGNATION, or a mixture of anger and disdain.—

dain.—Trace out all the various passions of man expressed in the different scenes and conditions of life.

Anger, with a desire of hurting another, is called **MALICE**: such is wicked men's anger against God and good men.—Anger, having a desire to hurt another in consequence of an apprehended injury, is **REVENGE**.

Many passions, which are painful or disagreeable in their present operations, are useful and necessary for us and for society.

Passions have their origin from impressions on the senses—from the operations of reason, by which good or evil are foreseen—from the recollections of memory—from the sight of beauty or ugliness, good or evil persons or actions.

Read Dr. Watts on the Passions, and on the Use of the Passions in Religion, 2 vols. 12mo. with Dr. Doddridge's Lectures, p. 27.

Our accurate writers on **MORALS** give us another view of the **PASSIONS** of the **SOUL**, viz. as divided into **PRIVATE** and **PUBLIC AFFECTIONS**.

In reviewing that large train of affections, which fill up the different stages of human life, we perceive this obvious distinction among them: that some of them respect the good of the individual, or **PERSON** himself. And other affections carry us beyond ourselves to the good of the

SPECIES,

SPECIES, or kind.—The former have, therefore, been called PRIVATE, and the latter PUBLIC affections.—Of the first sort are self-love, viz. a love of life, of pleasure, of power, and the like: of the latter are benevolence, compassion, gratitude, friendship, and the like. Of the private passions, some respect merely the safety and defence of the person, such as ANGER and FEAR: whereas others aim at some positive GOOD, as health, wealth, fame or honour, and pleasure.—The former sort, because of this difference of objects, may be termed DEFENSIVE PASSIONS: these answer to our DANGERS, and prompt us to avoid them if we can, or boldly to encounter them if we cannot.

The other class of PRIVATE PASSIONS excite us to pursue private positive GOOD, i. e. HAPPINESS, or true pleasure, and solid GLORY.

Our PUBLIC PASSIONS, or social affections, are adapted to the several *social* connexions and *relations* which we bear to others: and these passions prompt us to secure mankind from *dangers*, and supply their *wants*.

The measure or rule of the DEFENSIVE PASSIONS, is to keep them duly proportioned to our DANGERS. This is their natural pitch, or proper tone.

To keep our PRIVATE PASSIONS and desires proportioned to our real *wants*, is the just measure and pitch of this class of affections.

The

The rule or measure of the PUBLIC PASSIONS, is duly to proportion them to the *dangers* and *wants* of others, and to the various relations in which we stand to individuals, or to SOCIETY: or, in other words, the affections of this class are found and regular, when they prompt us to pursue the interest of any particular persons, in an intire consistency with the PUBLIC GOOD.*

This is the just and beautiful balance of the passions of the human soul: and the VIRTUE of a creature, endowed with such affections as MAN, must consist in acting agreeably to their natural *pitch* and *tenour*.

* See Elem. Mor. Philos. David Fordyce, 12mo.

Select BOOKS on the SOUL.

We omit those excellent authors who demonstrate the IMMORTALITY of the Soul on the Principles of Divine Revelation: and shall in this place only recommend two of the first rate geniuses in the whole world--- Dr. Young and Mr. Andrew Baxter. The former in his Night Thoughts has displayed this great truth in all the glowing colours of bright imagination. The latter I beg leave to introduce in the following manner:

A new work of great importance and use has lately appeared in the world, which I wish for powers to describe equal to its worth. It is intitled, *The EVIDENCE of REASON in proof of the IMMORTALITY of the SOUL*, independent on the more abstruse inquiry into the nature of MATTER and SPIRIT; collected from the manuscripts of the late Mr. ANDREW BAXTER, author of an Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul, and of Matho. Published by Dr. Duncan, of South-Warmborough, 8vo. 1779. Sold by T. Cadell, in the Strand.---I will dare to foretel, that all the advocates for the materiality and mortality of the soul of man, will not be able to give a solid answer to it, whilst the world endures: in a word the friends of the immortality of the soul will triumph for ever over all their adversaries.

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A
CONTEMPLATION
ON THE
INSUFFICIENCY OF REASON,
AND THE
NECESSITY OF DIVINE REVELATION
TO ENABLE US TO ATTAIN
ETERNAL HAPPINESS.

VOL. I.

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A CONTEMPLATION

ON THE

INSUFFICIENCY OF REASON.

The NATURE of human REASON described.—The INSUFFICIENCY of REASON to give proper DISCOVERIES concerning GOD and his infinite PERFECTIONS.—The true MANNER of worshipping GOD.—The supreme GOOD of MAN.—The perfect RULE of MORALITY.—The most powerful MOTIVES to VIRTUE and RELIGION.—The PARDON of SIN.—The REFINEMENT of the SOUL by SANCTIFICATION.—SUPPORT under the AFFLICTIONS and TROUBLES of LIFE.—CONSOLATIONS against the STINGS and TERRORS of DEATH.—The INSUFFICIENCY of REASON proved from a six-fold VIEW of the EXPERIENCE of the whole WORLD.—The glaring ABSURDITIES of the DEISTICAL SCHEME, in ten VIEWS.

REASON is a power of the mind to discern certain truths* which God has established in the natural and moral world.

REASON

* We chiefly mean the natural truths of geometry, of experimental philosophy, and some of the grand outlines of morality: these are the clearest truths that can be discerned by reason alone; to which may be added some undoubted facts in ancient and modern history.

REASON is a power of receiving ideas; of comparing those ideas, and of drawing consequences or conclusions from any truth already known or given.

REASON is a power of the mind to discern that all things are not alike true, good, fit, and beautiful; and to see that all tempers, actions, and qualities, are not alike evil, unfit, wrong, and deformed.

REASON is a power of judging of the nature, relations, and uses of things—the fitness or unfitness of actions—the good or evil qualities of tempers, and the truth or falsehood of propositions.

Let us now comprehend the substance of these various views of human reason in the following description of it.

REASON is that power which any intelligent being has of surveying his own existence and ideas, and comparing them; and of forming to himself, out of his clearest ideas, such general and fundamental truths, as he can be sure of, i. e. axioms, or self-evident propositions, and of making such inferences as are agreeable to truth, in order to find out more truth—prove some assertion, or disprove some objection—resolve some question—determine what is fit to be done on any special and difficult occasion;—the thing under consideration

sideration being first clearly defined, fairly stated, fully prepared, and well understood.

True reason is nothing else but the real nature of things, and their relations and proportions to each other, clearly apprehended in the mind to be as they are in themselves:—and thus reason must be the same for kind in all intelligent beings.—Dr. Leng, *serm. x. p. 298, 2d edit. 8vo.*

Reason* is that power of the human mind by which we draw inferences.

It is that power by which we discern that a relation subsists between two ideas, on account of our having found that these ideas bear certain relations to other ideas, which we call third ideas.

It is that power which enables us, from ideas that are known, to find out such as are unknown.

Without this power of drawing inferences, we never could proceed a single step beyond first principles, or intuitive axioms, in the discovery of any truth whatsoever.

These are some of the best representations of human reason, taken from Dr. Cotton Mather, Brine, Grove, and Dr. Leng; with that great master of reason, Wollaston, in his *Religion of Nature* delineated. I apprehend that better definitions of reason will not easily be found.—Our business now is to shew, that reason in man, with
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* Dr. Beattie, in his *Essay on the Immutability of Truth.*

all its utmost improvements by art, science, and learning, is not sufficient to lead us to the true knowledge of God, to a clear acquaintance with the whole extent of our duty, and to the certain enjoyment of eternal happiness, without the assistance of divine revelation.

I. REASON alone, without the AID of SCRIPTURE, cannot, in our present fallen STATE, discover GOD so clearly and fully to MAN, as to enable him to form affectionate APPREHENSIONS of GOD, and excite MAN to love and adore him, that he may enjoy his vital and blissful PRESENCE for ever.

1. *Reason cannot give us easy and plain notices of a GOD.*

Reason, in the Pagan world, never did furnish such familiar ideas of the being, presence, power, and wisdom of GOD, as were clear to the weakest mind, affecting to the most stupid heart, and suitable to the meanest understanding.

2. *Reason cannot give special and distinct ideas of GOD, in such a manner, as to enable the soul, in a moment, to distinguish GOD from all other objects in the universe, and give him that distinguishing veneration which his supreme dignity requires.*

3. *Reason is unable to give us certain and convincing notices of a GOD, so as to oblige the mind*

to

to assent to the truth of God's existence, convince it of the reality of the divine perfections, impress the conscience with a sense of the divine justice, and persuade the will to submit to the divine dominion.

4. *Reason cannot give extensive ideas and large apprehensions of God* in all his natural and moral perfections; nor is it able to discover all the natural and moral relations of God to our souls; so that we may be sure that no idea of God is wanting which is necessary to our real duty and final happiness.

5. *Reason is unable to give pleasant and lovely ideas of God*, such as shall suit a rational taste, and excite a tender affection to him as an amiable and good being, full of perfect beauty and love, good and beautiful in himself, fit to do us the highest good, worthy to receive all possible good from us: an object in whom we may expand our noblest powers with delight; a being that rejoices to do us good, and fill us with happiness for ever.—Reason can never furnish such sweet and satisfying discoveries of a God as shall set our hearts at rest, and be the termination of our will and reason in God, so as to have no occasion to seek any farther felicity to eternity.

6. *Reason, in its present weak and depraved state, cannot give such powerful and durable ideas of God*, as shall always abide with great force upon the soul,

soul.—Reason cannot discern such an energy of God, working from moment to moment, and renewing the impetus every instant on the conscience, passions, and will of man; and yet such an impression is absolutely necessary for man's duty and happiness.—Here reason discovers its utter weakness and insufficiency.

It is absolutely necessary, in order that a man should know God, and perform his whole duty to him, that he should have such a rational and incessant impression of God upon his soul, as shall have a sufficient force to influence every man in the world to a compliance with every duty, in every instant, in every circumstance and state of life, from youth to manhood, from manhood to old age, and to the very moment of death.

II. REASON cannot direct us in the true MANNER of performing the solemn WORSHIP of GOD.

Worship consists in a just sense and acknowledgment of the infinite perfections of God; and this acknowledgment and veneration must be regulated by the divine will, and not by the mere fancy of the worshipper.—How can mere reason assure us that we have clear and lively apprehensions of the nature and attributes of God; and a proper veneration for his infinite majesty and dignity? Can reason infuse into us a keen abhor-

rence

rence of all moral disorder, and inspire us with a powerful confidence of God's goodness and fidelity? Can reason produce in us a most intense love to God, and a vigorous joy in him as our life and felicity?

Reason alone would never produce in us a sweet and easy resignation of our will to God.—Reason will never inspire us with a sweet humility, nor make us truly grateful for every favour bestowed upon us.—Reason cannot enable us to exercise a resolute self-denial, or bear afflictions with a good grace, when God demands the one, and brings on the other.—Reason alone will never inspire us with a most mighty zeal for the honour and glory of God.—Reason can never enable us to act with wisdom before God, nor will it make us honest to the very bottom of our being in his service and interest.—Reason will never inspire us with an ardent desire after an eternal fruition of his glorious perfections.

III. REASON can never discover the true HAPPINESS of MAN.

Reason cannot discern that good which makes a man happy, or prepares him for happiness, or prevents his pain, or removes his misery.—Reason cannot discern wherein true happiness consists.—Reason knows not that good which is suited to our highest powers, and is agreeable to

every situation we can be in, and every character we can sustain.—Reason cannot discern that good which may be enjoyed without shame and confusion, and possessed without suspicion of wrong conduct, or dread of future ill consequences.—Reason cannot discern that good which will support us under the troubles and vexations of life, or that will refine and ravish our affections, stand the severe test of sober reflection, improve upon longer experience, afford the highest pleasure on the most frequent repetition, and be as lasting as our existence.

IV. REASON cannot discern a complete BODY of MORALS or universal VIRTUE, as the MEANS of HAPPINESS.

Reason never did give us a complete body of morality without defect or darkness.—A perfect scheme of morality must be easy and clear, in order to be useful to man.—A confused and indeterminate rule of duty is of no use.—A sound plan of morals must be universal to oppose every sin, and urge to every duty.—There must be nothing defective, nothing corrupt or vicious in the whole system.—Sound morality must have no pernicious maxim to draw after it any bad consequences. This plan must be avowed by God himself as a rule of duty, and enforced by his authority.—Reason leaves poor blind man to draw the rule of duty from the source of his own nature.

nature.—Man cannot frame a complete body of morality.—He could make no progress in a system of morals of his own, while he is a raw giddy youth, full of impure appetites and passions.—If clear rules could be found out, motives would be wanting.—If motives were discerned by man, even then assistances of light, warmth, and strength would be wanting, and we should freeze to ice amidst maxims of wisdom, and motives to virtue.

V. REASON cannot discover any powerful and effectual MOTIVES TO VIRTUE.

I. REASON cannot give us a full view of the immediate PRÉSENCE of the LAW-GIVER, and the infinite AUTHORITY of his LAWS, as the invariable RULE of OBEDIENCE.—Reason is unable to recommend the law, by shewing us the glorious qualifications of the law-giver in his power and greatness. It cannot give us right notions of his wisdom, justice, goodness, and clemency; and yet the discoveries of these glorious properties must be attained, in order to promote universal and genuine virtue.—Reason cannot give such a clear evidence of God from moment to moment, as shall strike strongly, affect warmly, leave a lively impression, and have a pungent influence, to quicken us to the practice of virtue.

Reason cannot shew us that our Governor is always near; that he is every moment conversant

with us; that we have every day convincing and delightful evidences of his goodness, wisdom, justice, and kindness; with all other beautiful perfections fitting him for government. These notices are absolutely necessary to enforce a regard to the will of God.

Reason cannot powerfully excite to obedience, by shewing us that title of the law-giver is indisputable, and the ground of his claim to our affection clearly made known. Such is the transcendent excellence of the nature of God, as to render him the only fit being to govern; but reason is blind to this excellence. Reason doth not clearly discern that God is the creator of all things, that he has a propriety in all his creatures. Reason is blind as to God's preserving us in being, and his special care of us, and inspection into our existence, and the many precious benefits he has bestowed upon us. All this close influence of God upon us, from moment to moment, is basely disregarded by the unenlightened mind.

Reason is unable to give us a clear and satisfying discovery of God's concernment in his own laws, i. e. that the God who is thus qualified for, and rightly possessed of, the government, has made such laws, and stamped his authority upon them.

Reason is incapable of forming great and venerable ideas of the excellency of God, and his

his right to give laws. But if we had brighter apprehensions of his dignity and right to govern, yet this would have no weight with us, if we were not clearly satisfied that the laws of nature are the laws of God.

Reason is unable to discern that the laws of God, in the nature and contents of them, are fully agreeable to the glorious perfections we desire in a law-giver; such as wisdom, justice, goodness, and clemency, or kind affection to man. But as these perfections are either not at all, or but obscurely known by the light of reason, so the impress of the attributes of God on the laws of nature has not been discovered by the best geniuses of the Pagan world; nor is it discoverable by our blind reason. No truth in the world is more certain; we not only dare affirm it, but we can clearly make it appear even to demonstration, viz. that the frame of the universe, and the whole system of the laws of nature, are adapted to the powers and passions of man in a state of innocence and rectitude; which is not the case with man now: no, verily, this is far from being his present state.

And, therefore, how to reconcile the perfection of these laws to the most rational apprehensions of God, and the present state of man, is an incomprehensible speculation of infinite consequence, and of the most prodigious difficulty, so that
human

human reason never could have got through it: its utmost force could never have surmounted it: the whole united world of minds could never have solved the difficulty, if God had not graciously given us another guide beside reason and the light of nature.

Reason cannot give a certain knowledge that God has a great regard to his laws, and accurately inspects whether or no these laws are observed and obeyed. The knowledge of this would be a strong inducement to us to regard his laws. Here reason likewise fails.

Reason, in this respect, is no less in the dark than in other points of the utmost importance.

The face of things in the world hath so various, so contrary, and so horrid an appearance, that we never could see clearly thro' this difficult matter, if we were left to judge of God and his laws by the mere light of nature.

The aboundings of sin in all parts of the globe—the temporal prosperity of millions of sinners—the sufferings of the best men, and the afflicted state of the most virtuous, have led multitudes to deny the providence and government of God; and many of the wiser and better sort of mankind have felt the most painful doubts concerning the wisdom and rectitude of the divine administration.

Reason

Reason cannot draw forth our best powers into action: the inducements to obedience must shine with the brightest light and ardour, so as to illuminate and fire the mind; and not only dissipate our doubts concerning the will and dominion of God, but likewise shew the excellency of submission, and the beauty and pleasure of humble and faithful obedience.

The mind of man is so strangely tossed between hope and fear, concerning the goodness and justice of God's providential government, that he cannot, by the force of reason, come to any certain conclusion what God will do with him in time and eternity.

Rational men, at some times, are astonished to see God so patiently bear the most wicked insults on his law. At other times, they are filled with the most alarming fears at the terrible effects of his punishing justice. The reasons of the divine government in the exertions of patience and punishment, are absolutely impenetrable by the force of reason, and bid defiance to the greatest acuteness and sagacity.

On these tossings between hope and fear, read the nervous Halyburton,* p. 144, and the great John Maclaurin on the Glorifying in the Cross, p. 68.

II. REASON is defective in a second MOTIVE to DUTY.—It doth not clearly discern the present pleasures of obedience, nor satisfy us with respect

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* In his admirable book against the Deists, 4to. 1714.

to the present rewards of virtue. Reason cannot produce in us such a serious and delightful sense of God in the soul, nor impress upon us such a feeling conviction of our intire dependance upon, and obligations to him, as shall excite us to love him with a lively gratitude, zealously strive to promote his glory, and proclaim, to the utmost of our capacity, the excellence of his perfections.

i. *Reason, in our present state of depravity, is unable to discern the certainty and evidence of a virtuous and religious life.*—Man, without divine aid, cannot discern and know that he is always in the right; he cannot see his way clear, and his end sure. The way of his duty will be always perplexed; he will be ever without clear true light—that light which produces a lively conviction and rest of mind in a course of obedience. Man, by the force of reason, cannot be absolutely sure that he complies with the whole will of God, nor attain to satisfaction that he sincerely endeavours to please Him. Man, by mere reason, cannot be sure that the path he walks in is the path of eternal life and happiness. The way of mere reason is covered with so much darkness, that he cannot see all through to the end. His prospect is obscure; and eternal objects are so confused before him, that he cannot discover where his path ends; he cannot conclude that it will terminate in God.

ii. *Reason,*

II. *Reason, in its present state, cannot clearly and steadily discover the great beauty and excellence of a religious and virtuous life.*—There is nothing more lovely than light in the whole creation of God; nothing more needful or useful. Light is not a greater natural beauty in the material world, than virtue is a moral beauty in the rational world. True virtue is the beauty of human life, the splendor and glory of human actions. It is that active principle by which our whole mind and heart are intentionally directed to produce good towards all the objects of our free agency in heaven and earth.

But how blind has human reason, in all ages, been to this beauty of temper and action—this most lovely quality and ornament of the soul!

III. *Mere reason cannot afford that light which will inspire the pleasures and joys of a virtuous life.*

—To have the eyes of reason opened, and the understanding brightly illuminated, what a rapture and pleasing surprise must it be! how new, how beautiful, how charming must every object appear! But reason cannot furnish these pleasures. Reason utterly fails in giving us the pleasures of moral perception, of religious action, of virtuous reflection, pure fruition, and the hope of future happiness in perfection.

(I.) *Reason cannot supply the pleasures of virtuous action.*—All pleasure supposes action.—God has

made man an active being, so that idleness is its own torment.—God has so framed man, that the best pleasures always attend the best actions.—Every good action is pleasant: and the better the action, the greater is the pleasure that attends it.

Pleasures, flowing from bad actions, are of a low sordid nature: the divine wisdom suffers only some mean dreggy pleasures to attend vicious actions, on purpose to put the powers of reason to the proof. Vicious pleasures are hollow and unsatisfying; they are momentary and soon gone; are attended with fear of bad consequences, with a painful suspicion of wrong conduct; sicken us with frequent repetition, and are bitter and tormenting on the review.—Mere reason can furnish us with no pleasure that will wait on every step of human life. The life of a man that has nothing more than reason to conduct him, has many barren spots on which no pleasures grow.

Reason alone can never raise us to that sublime devotion to God, which is the most rapturous exercise of the human soul. It can never inspire us with just and enlarged ideas of the divine perfections, nor impress upon us the divine image, nor produce in us a happy warmth and flow of affection to the first and best cause of all things.

(2.) *Reason alone cannot enable us to enjoy the sweet pleasures of reflection, after the performance of a good*

good action.—This is a rich privilege indeed! but reason cannot bestow it. A truly good man can enjoy the time past as well as the time present. The time past is gone, considered as a part of duration; and in this sense can never be recalled. But time, as filled with good actions, is never lost, while memory and recollection remain. But as reason is insufficient to excite us to good actions, so consequently it can furnish us with no pleasing reflections on our past conduct.

(3.) *Reason alone can never furnish the pleasures of exquisite fruition of the presence and love of God.*

—A poor depraved man's time is worse than lost; he has no fruit, but that of a vitiated heart; no good fruit at all—yet must give an account to God of every thought, word, and action. Vice, which allures the wretch with an harlot's face, now viewed behind, appears as a cursed hag, an ill-favoured forcerefs. Conscience turns his enraged enemy, and torments his very soul.

If man was truly good, reflection would prove a rich, wonderful, and delightful faculty. By the help of this wondrous power, things past may be made present to the mind, and it may be made an inlet to very great and lasting pleasures. If a man was truly good, his life would be spent in innocence and usefulness; he would feel a pleasure that he could repeat a thousand times; and the more exquisite, in that, while it arose from

time past, it would run on into time future, and terminate in a vast eternity. On the other hand, the pains of fruition in sin and vice are far beyond all its pleasures.

(4.) *Reason can never furnish the pleasures of hope and trust in God for all future time.*—It can never enable us to enjoy the future duration of the next life in the present. If a man was truly good, hope would grow up into a kind of assurance; it would fix the soul on a rock, and fortify the mind in the prospect of ill, by a firm persuasion that God would not forsake us; it would teach a man to say, I fix my confidence in infinite presence, infinite power, infinite faithfulness, and infinite love. I am resolutely fixed on God; I have new desires and vast expectations. Thus, time past, present, and to come; would all conspire in the pleasures of religion and virtue. But where is the man to be found in the whole world, that, by the mere force of reason, can feel these hopes and these pleasures?

IV. *Reason is unable to exhibit the alluring and instructive nature of a religious and virtuous life.*

Light allures and attracts the eyes of all men. The light of virtue in a good man is the most instructive and attractive in the whole world; it vastly excels all the finest declamations in favour of virtue. The light and life which vital virtue diffuses around it, would invite other men into
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the same path, and guide them to pursue with ardour the same practice. But where is the man to be found that, on the principle of reason alone, hath exhibited this beautiful example? The light and beauty of a virtuous conversation is more convincing than the mere light of good principles, or the eloquence of the best orators.

It is a method above all others of promoting true virtue in the world.

A shining light instructs, an ardent light inflames, a beautiful light persuades the passions of the heart, and excites imitation; but where is such a shining, ardent, and beautiful light to be found on the principles of reason?

v. *Reason is unable to make an high advancement in the power and beauty of virtue.*—True religion ought to be of a progressive nature. Vital virtue should resemble the advancing light of the rising sun.

As the sun rises higher and higher toward the meridian, so a truly virtuous man should be still advancing in goodness. Internal virtue should urge him on, by a rational and forcible stimulus, to a farther growth in knowledge, perfection, and usefulness.—But here the powers of unassisted reason utterly fail.

(1.) *A truly virtuous man ought to improve his knowledge of God and himself.*—He will strive

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to advance in clearer apprehensions of the infinite perfections of his maker. His conceptions of the dignity of God, and of the powers and affections of his own soul, will be more vivid and distinct, his mind will be more free from pride and haughtiness, his reason more free from error, his judgment more purged from prejudices, and more correct in its decisions. But where is the man to be found in the whole world that is capable of these noble advancements on the principles of reason alone?

(2.) *Reason is unable to produce a fixed adhesion of the will to God and virtue: it cannot give us strength and firmness in true religion.*

An adhesion of the will to God is properly the strength of virtue. If reason were sufficient for the happiness of man, we should find a natural progress in the life of virtue; and this adhesion of the will to the goodness, rectitude, and beauty of God, would grow stronger with time, so as to bear a proportion with the growing apprehensions of God, and the enlarged views of the human understanding. There is a great degree of strength in the union of the will to God, and in this union true virtue consists. But did reason alone ever produce it? A soul that truly feels it, hopes to have the approbation of God before the whole rational world—but reason can neither produce nor cherish this hope.

(3.) *Reason*

(3.) *Reason cannot excite us to that sublime virtue which will enable a man to shine in the perfection of his example and character.*

A man of true virtue will go on to higher degrees of beauty and perfection. He has fewer blemishes than other men, and fewer than he himself once had—he is more purified from the vices of flesh and spirit—he corrects whatever is amiss in his temper and conduct—his example was formerly good, but it is now much brighter and better, more lovely and instructive. The man of high and delicate virtue labours about his example and character, as a painter doth upon a picture, or a statuary, on a piece of first-rate sculpture; and, before he finishes his piece, he strives to give a beauty to the whole, and to spread a grace over his whole character.* But we challenge the whole world to produce one man that hath done this on the mere principles of reason.

(4.) *Reason can never enable a man to advance sweetly in the ease and pleasure of virtuous action, and increase in the high-spirited joy of well-doing.*

A man of true virtue will find, to his unspeakable pleasure, that he advances in facility of action—he will find the pleasure of right conduct still increasing—he will feel his faculties more and more adapted to actions of generous
greatness,

* See Grove on the Certainty and Pleasures of Religion, 8vo.

greatness, and the pleasures of social benevolence. By a kind of divine and god-like instinct, he will run naturally into worthy manners and practices; whilst a wicked man will make a swift progressive motion into all the plagues and miseries of vice. Where is the man who, on the principles of mere reason, hath pursued the former, and avoided the latter?

VI. *Reason alone is unable to carry any man into such purity of heart, and life, as shall at last issue in a state of perfection in the full fruition of God.*—The perfection of virtue, in the order and operations of our noblest powers and affections, would certainly be the result of a rich advance in perfect goodness. But here reason eternally fails.

Human reason, in its present state, is utterly unable to guide us to that perfection of happiness in God, and that rich enjoyment of the whole soul, in all its principles and powers of fruition, which our nature appears to be designed for in its original constitution.

And as reason is defective in this second motive, (viz.) it cannot display, in a lively and convincing manner, the present advantages and pleasures of virtue and obedience. So we affirm, that,

III. REASON is defective in a third MOTIVE to DUTY, (viz.) it doth not give us a clear and striking

striking view of FUTURE rewards and pleasures, to repay and recompence us for all present disadvantages and hardship we suffer for the sake of God and virtue.

IV. REASON is defective in a fourth MOTIVE to VIRTUE, (viz.) It cannot discover, in a clear and striking manner, those terrible punishments which God will most surely execute on all resolute and determined rebels against his government.

V. REASON is defective in a fifth MOTIVE to virtue, (viz.) It cannot shew us one example of pure and spotless virtue in the whole world of mankind.

Examples move to action; precepts only teach. Laws and precepts only instruct us what ought to be done. But reason can neither furnish precepts or examples to excite effectually one man to vital virtue.

VI. REASON is defective in a sixth MOTIVE and MEANS to VIRTUE, (viz.) It cannot discover the least assistance from God for the great work of obedience to God, or benevolence to mankind.

Thus far we have shewn the utter insufficiency of reason to make proper discoveries of God and his infinite perfections—to point out the true manner of worshipping Him—to shew the supreme good or true happiness of man—to discover a perfect rule of morality; or plan of sound

virtue and morals—and to discern the most powerful motives to virtue and religion. We now proceed to shew that reason cannot discover the pardon of sin—the refinement of the soul by sanctification—support under troubles, and comfort in death.

VII. REASON is unable to discover the PARDON of SIN.

1. Reason cannot discern the estimate which God made of the first act of sin, nor how he treated the first parents of mankind after their act of treason and rebellion.

2. Reason could never discover the least institution of a propitiatory offering to atone for the guilt of sin, nor can it intimate the way in which God would be propitious to a rebel.

3. Reason is unable to discern God inviting and alluring men to repentance; it can discover no command of God to repent. The light of nature shews that God is affronted and displeased, but it shews no command to repent.

4. Reason cannot discover one sinner pardoned from the beginning of the world to this very hour.

5. Reason is unable to discern the great design of God's patience towards a wicked world for thousands of years. This is an incomprehensible conduct

conduct in God, which no sagacity of man can account for or solve.

6. Reason is insufficient to shew us any happy souls bursting into songs of praise for pardon from God as a merciful being.

7. Reason can discover no holy and spiritual worship appointed by God for any of his rebellious creatures, nor does it assure us that any worship will be acceptable to him: no worship at all is commanded by God on the foot of reason: this is an awful thought, viz. that God commands no man to worship, nor exhorts or commands any man to repent and return to God.

8. Reason can never discover one purpose in the HEART of God, nor one promise in the MOUTH of God, nor one action in the CONDUCT of God, that gives a sure and certain indication of the pardon of one sin—much less can it discern ten thousand promises and actions flowing from the heart of God in streams of light and love upon lost mortals.

9. Reason cannot discover one name belonging to God that inspires a solid hope of pardon.

10. Reason can never discover one perfection in God, that can pardon—it never possibly can discern the harmony of justice and mercy in the pardon of *one sin* in the whole world.

The united reason and wisdom of all mankind

can never discover how justice and mercy may be shewn in the same moment to a criminal in civil government, much less in the government of God. This thought deserves to be amplified and urged to the utmost.

11. Reason is not in the least able to discover a suitable provision for a divine and infinite governor, to the end that he may pardon sin with honour to his moral character and government.

It can discern no ransom paid to a divine and infinite conqueror—no sacrifice or atonement to a divine and injured monarch—no satisfaction in the least to a divine and infinite judge.

Reason can discover no friend to us, who could, by the dispositions of his heart, and by his actions and sufferings, provide for the full meridian glory of divine justice—as making laws—as rewarding obedience to laws—as punishing the violation of laws in the most perfect and impartial manner:—and this surety likewise freely and kindly obeying all the righteous commands, and bearing all the righteous curses of the law, which it otherwise required of us in order to escape punishment, and to have a right to eternal happiness in God.

Concerning all this, reason is at an inexpressible loss.

12. Reason cannot discover one man sent by God to proclaim one word of pardon to a guilty world.

Not

Not any one man, nor any set of men, can be discovered by reason as sent with a commission from God, and sealed with the broad seal of heaven, to proclaim so much as a single hint of pardon to a guilty world, or to any individual on earth one moment through thousands of years. We defy all mankind to deny this and prove the contrary.

13. Reason is not able to discover God issuing out any commands to rebels to forgive one another the crimes they commit against each other, and the offences they give to one another.

No man, by the exercise of reason alone, can discern that God has ordered him to forgive his fellow-creatures their offences; no, not in one instance for a moment. Hence see the horrid spirit of revenge amongst the hot-blooded heroes of the heathen world.

VIII. REASON is utterly insufficient to suppress VICIOUS INCLINATIONS, and root them out of the SOUL; or to refine and purify the HEART by a powerful and effectual SANCTIFICATION.

How blind was the heathen world, how dark their wisest philosophers, how childish and silly are all the best means they prescribe. Plato bids you purify your souls by music and the mathematics.

Can a violin charm away lust? Can Euclid's Elements subdue your pride, and purge out uncleanness

cleanness and adultery, avarice, malice, and rash anger?

Reason cannot produce and cherish any of those noble and excellent qualities in the soul which are necessary for a life of virtue and holiness.

1. A vigorous bent of the mind, or a powerful and ardent inclination and propensity of heart to virtue, is necessary to the practice of it.—But here reason utterly fails.

All mankind have an actual bent and propensity of heart to moral evil, or vice and wickedness.

2. A cordial peace and heart-felt friendship with God, is absolutely necessary to a life of vital virtue and sanctification in the sight of God.

Nothing less than a strong sense of peace with God can produce an earnest desire after a resemblance to God.—But here reason, with all its united powers, utterly fails.

3. A sufficiency of strength and light from God is absolutely necessary for a life of holiness towards God, and conformity to his image or moral perfections: to be like God in wisdom, a man must be wise; to resemble his goodness, a man must be good at heart; to bear the likeness of his holiness, a man must be purified and refined in the temper of his soul; to resemble God's justice and truth, a man must be impressed with a sense
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of the beauty of justice, and be filled with sincerity and integrity of heart.—But did mere reason ever produce these charming qualities? Where is the man to be found? In what age, in what country did he live, that performed all this by the power of reason alone?

4. A lively hope of being happy in the presence of God to eternity is absolutely necessary to a life of genuine virtue in the present world.

Without this vigorous hope, no man on earth will ever practice universal virtue—this love to God and all mankind. And where is this man to be found, who, on the principles of reason alone, ever pursued and practised universal virtue? Where was he born? Where was he educated? Where did he live?—No answer can be given! our infidels are struck dumb for ever; they cannot for their lives and souls give us a satisfactory answer to these queries, consequently their scheme of infidelity is ruined; and if they had any moral honesty in their hearts they would openly declare and confess it before the whole world.

For a rational creature in his present state, and with all the prodigious imperfections of his internal character, to look for an eternity of happiness in God, *is to look very high indeed*; it is to form very grand and exalted conceptions and hopes; and it is demonstrably and undoubtedly certain,

certain, that no man in the world will go to the expence of denying all his vile appetites and passions after present good, without a strong sensation of invisible and eternal good, to reward him for his self-denial, and the resolute practice of pure and perfect virtue.—Now I ask again, Where is the man to be found that has preserved in his bosom an high hope of the eternal fruition of God as the supreme good, and on this principle has denied every bad appetite, every polluted passion, every impure inclination, and has exerted all his powers in love to God and to all mankind? There is no such man to be found in the whole world—he is yet to be born.

Reason cannot discover the true and only source of holiness, nor the foundation on which it is enjoyed, (*viz.*) a union of heart with God. Reason cannot discover the method and order of holiness—nor the means of holiness—consolations of God—good and bright examples—nor the grand efficient of holiness, or sanctification, the holy and eternal Spirit of God—nor the grand secret of living to God, by a new constitution of soul—nor the right use of all the means of increasing holiness—nor the beauty, the rich advantages, and pleasures of holiness in time and eternity. Reason cannot give any solid comfort from God for one moment to enable us to perform the duties of his reasonable, just, and good law.

VIII. REASON cannot support us under the TROUBLES and bitter AFFLICTIONS of this LIFE.

Reason can give no sufficient relief to the mind under any troubles, trials, or pinching and critical times of distress—she cannot discover any certain supplies in want; nor discover God's providence taking special notice of any one of the human race, having a care for sparrows, or numbering the hairs of our head—she knows not that there is any one being in our world whom God will vouchsafe to call his friend, nor can discover one angel in the universe employed in taking care of us, nor can discern any promise that God has made; no, not the utmost exertion of reason can tell that God has ever made one promise, or ever will to eternity—she knows not that God has any people on earth or in heaven. Reason knows of no true and pure holiness and righteousness on earth; she can only shew you a parcel of loathsome rags, smeared with the putrid ulcers of sinful souls. Reason knows not the Son of God; she cannot form one thought of him, nor tell that God has a son; but is stone blind about a saviour. Reason knows not the Spirit of God, or that God's spirit has any existence, that God has an eternal spirit—she finds eternity all in horrid darkness; even blackness of darkness. Reason knows not a word of heaven: an eternal heaven, with all its spiritual pleasures and fulness of joy, is totally unknown—she is quite blind about God's kingdom in our

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world, or in the world to come; can discern nothing but eternal poverty in the soul. Reason is blind to all God's salvations of every kind, and ignorant of assurances of interest in God. She has no discernment or experience of God's special favour and faithfulness in the least: knows of no sweetness in God our saviour and redeemer. Reason cries, if the sweetness of the world is lost, all is lost to me for ever—she knows not that there is any drop of love in God for one soul. Reason is blind concerning the true and solid usefulness of afflictions, trials, troubles, and distresses in life: she cannot discern their use to the souls of men, nor make all troubles work for good—she can give no FEAR-NOTS: she knows not a word or a syllable of any FEAR-NOT from the voice of God: is totally at a loss as to all final and happy issues of our affairs with God at the concluding scenes of life. Reason is deaf as death to all notices of God's oath, life, soul, arm, and consolations to sinners and penitent rebels—she cannot give a lively and strong apprehension of the weight and worth of eternal good. Reason cannot impress on the soul a sweet sense of happiness; can give no prospect of heaven; cannot infuse the least taste for heaven; cannot inspire the least sense of the sweetness, reality, and solidity of invisible things. Reason knows nothing of the appearances of God—nothing of the last state

state of the universe and empire of God—nothing of his singular and free interpositions in our favour, either for time or eternity—all is dark! dark! dark as death.

IX. REASON cannot support us in the AGONIES of DEATH, nor arm us against its APPROACHES and its TERRORS.

Reason hates to think of death, it flies from it as the terrible of all terrors—fondly promises a long life—looks to second causes to preserve life, (viz.) physicians, diet, exercise—clings to this world and the present life, as the ivy to the trunk of the oak—cannot enable and excite any man to forsake the inward love of sin, which makes death so dreadful—nor wean and divorce him from the power of a lustful taste and impure desires—cannot inspire us with a calm repose on God's tender care, or encourage a confidence in his love—can give no consolations against the terrors of death—cannot discover that God will live with us and abide by us for one moment in life or death, we are such sorry guilty wretches—can discern no right to dare to call God father, in our present depraved and guilty state. Reason has not one idea of a friendly mediator between God and us—cannot tell that Christ is either dead or alive, or that he has any existence, or ever had any—knows not a word of the incarnation, sufferings, resurrection, or ascension of Christ—is absolutely blind

concerning union with God's heart, and love for a poor lost soul, a vile sinner—it never could start a thought of union with Christ as a living head. Reason, if it speaks out the clear truth, must terribly tell us that death is the door to all evils, the passage into a world of horrors—if she tells the whole truth, will curse every man to eternal sinfulness, and assure him that sin shall never, never leave him; no, no, nor ever forsake his filthy wretched soul—knows of no happiness after death, no, not for one soul in all the world. Reason knows nothing of a resurrection of our dead bodies—has not one thought of it. Corrupt reason scorns the least notices of it—disdains to receive any news of the resurrection—scoffs at any man as a mad fool, and a babbling fellow,* who shall speak one word about it. Reason, if it speaks out the whole truth concerning every sinner, must conclude on our eternal separation from God, without any hope of his favour.

X. Of the INSUFFICIENCY of REASON to lead us to eternal HAPPINESS—arising from a six-fold general VIEW of the whole world.

As an illustration of what has hitherto been discovered for demonstrating the insufficiency of natural religion, we shall here offer a six-fold view of the experience of the world in general, without

* *Επιτεμολογὴ* *ἄνθρωπος*, a retailer of scraps, or a contemptible prating fellow. Acts xvii. 18.

without descending to particular instances, which are every where to be met with, and have in part been touched at, and offered before.

1. Let us view man as a creature made for this end, TO GLORIFY GOD, AND ENJOY HIM FOR EVER: abstracted from the consideration of his corruption, which the deists sometimes deny, and sometimes with difficulty do but in part admit. And let us consider him as left to pursue this noble end, in the use of his rational faculties under the conduct of the mere light of nature. If we consider him thus, and enquire into the experience of the world, how far he has reached this end, we shall find such an account as will much confirm the truth we have asserted, and weaken the credit of the deists, with their imaginary sufficiency of nature's light to conduct man to the end for which he was made.

If we look to the VULGAR, the generality of mankind, we shall find them with their backs turned to the chief end, never once thinking for what they were made, but pursuing other things: every one, as lust leads him, following his own humour, walking in a direct and open contradiction to that law, which was originally designed for the guide of our life, and the directory to bliss; that happiness which all would enjoy, though they know not where to find it.

If

If we observe the PHILOSOPHERS we may see them sitting up late, rising early, eating the bread of carefulness, wearying themselves in the search of happiness, running into some hundreds of different notions about it; and yet not one of them discovering, or at least understanding the true one; and as little agreed about the way to it. We may hear them talk of virtue, but never directing to its proper end, the glory of God. We may hear them urging the practice of it, but not upon the proper grounds. Rarely having any regard to the authority of God, the only formal ground of obedience. Instead of plain rules, useful to mankind, they obtrude dark sentences, rather designed to make their fellow mortals admire them, than to be useful to any individual. They every where tack their own fancies to the divine law, a weight sufficient to sink the other, as to its truth, in the apprehensions of men, or at least, as to its usefulness. They offer a rule defective in most things of moment, corrupt in many, ruining in not a few instances, destitute of any other authority than their own say so, or *ipse dixit*, unintelligible to the vulgar, and destitute of inducements to obey it.

2. Let us consider man as made to glorify God; but barred from this end, by the interposition of those great hindrances and difficulties which now are certainly in its way; I mean

DARKNESS,

DARKNESS, GUILT, and CORRUPTION, which are like vast mountains in the way to happiness.

As to that DARKNESS that has overspread the minds of men; if we examine the state of the vulgar, we find them like blind men, content to grope along in the dark, through a miry way, stumbling frequently, and falling sometimes dangerously; yet satisfied with their case, not looking after light: not so much because they want it not, as because they have no notion of it, or its usefulness; like blind men that never saw the sun, and therefore suffer the want of light with less regret than they who once saw, but now have lost their eyes. They follow as they are led; are ready to take hold of any hand, though of one as blind as themselves, and are never sensible of the mistake till sunk into an abyss, from which they can never extricate themselves. The philosophers, indeed, seem a little more sensible of their case; but after all their painful endeavours, we find them utterly in the dark, as to all useful and necessary knowledge of God, or the way of worshipping him; of ourselves, our happiness, our sins, the way of obtaining pardon, our duty, or our corruption.

As to GUILT; if we look at the case of mankind, and their endeavours for the removal of it, we find the vulgar drowned in endless despair, or fatal security; like men at their wits end, trying all the methods which fear, superstition, or racked imagination

gination can devise, and still unsatisfied with their own inventions; they are ready to try every scheme which self-designing men, or even the devil, can suggest to them, sparing no cost, no travel, no pain. They refuse not to give the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul. The philosophers either think, through their pride, they have no sin, because they are not so bad, quite so bad as the vulgar; or, if they still retain some sense of sin, they are driven into the utmost perplexity, being convinced of the wickedness of the measures taken by the vulgar, or at least, of their uselessness and impertinency, and yet unable to find out better; they try to divert their thoughts from a fore they know no plaister for.

As to CORRUPTION; we find all confessing it, crying out of the disease; and indeed it is rather because it will not be hid, for the sore runs, than because it is painful to many. The vulgar despair of stemming the tide, and finding it easier to swim with the stream, are willingly carried headlong. The body of philosophers are indeed like weak watermen on a strong stream, they row one way, but are carried another. Though they pretend to aim at the ruining of vice, yet really they do it no hurt, save that they speak against it. A few of the best of them being ashamed to be found amongst the rest swimming, or rather carried down the stream on the surface, that is, in open vice,

vice, have dived to the bottom; but really made as much way under water, as the other on the surface.

3. LET US VIEW MANKIND UNDER THE GOODNESS AND FORBEARANCE OF GOD, THESE HELPS WHICH SOME THINK SUFFICIENT. This word is used, or rather abused, as a blind in a matter of very great importance; and men who use it will scarce tell, if they can, even in the subject of the present discourse, in what sense they use it. But let it be as it will, some pretend the works of providence, particularly God's goodness and forbearance, sufficient. Well, let us see the experience of the world in this.

If we view mankind under this consideration, we may see them so far from being led to repentance, that the most part never once take notice of this conduct of God. Others, and they not a few, have abused it to the worst purposes. Because judgment against an evil work has not been speedily executed, therefore their hearts were wholly set in them to do evil. The more inquisitive have had the insolence to charge God as encouraging wickedness. And as for the favours they enjoyed themselves, they looked on them, not as calls to repentance, but as rewards for their pretended virtues, and scanty ones too, below the worth of them. Not a few of them have gone near to arraign God of injustice for lesser afflictions they were tried with; while others

have been entangled and tossed to and fro by cross appearances. So that none have by this goodness of God been led to repentance.

4. Let us view men living in the place where REVELATION obtains, or where the CHRISTIAN RELIGION is professed and taught, but renouncing and rejecting it, and in profession owning only NATURAL RELIGION: such are the DEISTS among us. If we consider their words, they talk indeed that natural religion is sufficient; and to make it appear so, some of them have adorned it with jewels stolen from the temple of God, ascribing to the light of nature discoveries in religion, which originally were owing to revelation, and were never dreamed of where it did not obtain; though being once-discovered, they have gained the consent of sober reason. But now we are not considering the speech, but the power of these men; not what they say of the sufficiency of natural religion, but what real experience they have of it, and what evidence they give of this in their practice.

If we thus consider them, we find, that altho', when they have a mind to impose their notion of the sufficiency of natural religion upon others, they pretend, that it is clear as to a great many points or principles, that are confessedly of the greatest moment in religion; yet when they begin to speak more plainly and freely their own inward

inward sentiments, they shew that they are not fixed, no not about the very principles themselves, even those of them which are of the greatest consequence. Mr. Gildon, publisher of the Oracles of Reason, is not far from asserting two anti-gods, one good, the other evil, and so falls in with the Persians. Blount favours the opinion of Ocellus Lucanus, of the world's eternity, and consequently denies, or at least hesitates about, the creation. The immateriality of the soul seems to be flatly rejected by them all. Nor do they seem very firm concerning its immortality. In short, after they have been at so much pains to trim up natural religion, and make it look like sufficient, they yet express a hesitancy about its sufficiency to eternal life. We may see what Lord Herbert says in his writings. Blount, in a letter to Dr. Sydenham, prefixed to the Deists Reasons, tells us plainly, that it is not safe to trust deism alone, without christianity joined to it. And the deists hope is summed up in this, in the fourth chapter of the summary of the Deists Reasons, that there is more probability of his salvation, than of the credulous and ill-living papist: and that is just none at all.

Nor does their practice give one jot of a better proof of the sufficiency of that religion they profess: nay, on the contrary, it affords convincing evidence of its weakness, uselessness, and utter in-

sufficiency. Their lives evidence that they are not in earnest about any thing in religion. They are Latitudinarians in practice. Their words and their actions have no favor of a regard to a deity: but they go on in all manner of impieties in practice; and, perhaps, in the end, put a period to a wretched life by their own hands, as Blount, Uriel, Acofta, and others have done; and the survivors justify the deed, upon trifling and childish reasons; as not knowing but they may one day be put to use the same shift. I am not in the least deterred from asserting this by the commendations that the publisher of the Oracles of Reason gives to Mr. Blount as a person remarkable for virtue.

If a profane, jocular, and unbecoming treatment of the gravest and most important truths which belong, even by his own acknowledgment, to natural religion; yea, and are the principal props of it; and if gross and palpable dissimulation be instances of that virtue he ascribes to him, and evidences of those just and adequate notions of the deity, in which he says Mr. Blount was bred up: I could give instances enough from the book itself of such virtues; but I love not to rake in the ashes of the dead. Again, others of the deists have wearied themselves in chase of a phantom to no purpose; and, having neither the grace nor ingenuity to return to the religion they abandoned, either land in downright atheism in principle

principle and practice, or they throw themselves into the arms of the pretended infallible guide; and thereby give evidence how well founded the jesuitical maxim is, *Make a man once an atheist, he will soon turn papist.*

5. LET US VIEW MEN LIVING UNDER THE GOSPEL, EMBRACING IT IN PROFESSION, BUT UNACQUAINTED WITH THAT SPIRIT THAT GIVES LIFE AND POWER TO ITS DOCTRINES, PRECEPTS, PROMISES, THREATS, AND ORDINANCES. They, besides being possessed of all the advantages of the light of nature, have moreover the superadded advantages of revelation, and its institutions. They have ministers and parents instructing them, and discipline to restrain them; they are trained up in the faith of future rewards, and instructed in the nature and excellency of them for their encouragement; they have punishments proposed to deter them from sin, which they profess to believe; yet, if we consider the practice of the generality of such persons, it gives a sufficient evidence, that all this is not enough. Who but a man blind or foolish can then dote so far as to pretend the light of nature alone sufficient, when it is not so, even when helped by so many accessory improvements.

6. IF WE CONSIDER THE EXPERIENCE OF THOSE, WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE GOSPEL IN TRUTH, AND FELT ITS POWER, WE FIND THAT THEY HAVE IN-
DEED

DEED REACHED THE ENDS OF RELIGION IN PART, and have a fair prospect of future success. Well, what is their sense of the sufficiency of nature's light? Why, if you observe them in their public devotions, you shall hear heavy out-crys of their own darkness, weakness, and wickedness; you may hear serious prayers for divine light, and life to quicken, strengthen, and incline them to follow duty, and support them in it, against the power of temptations, which they own themselves unable to withstand, without the powerful aids of divine grace. If you follow them into their retirements, where the matter is managed betwixt God and them alone, where they are under none of these temptations to maintain the credit of any received notions, and therefore must be presumed to speak out the practical sense of the state of their case without any disguise; there you shall find nothing but deep confessions of guilt, darkness, and inability, with earnest crys, prayers, and tears, for supplies of grace: and what they attain in matters of religion, you shall find them freely owning, that it was not they themselves, but the grace of God in them which brought them to this. And the more any one is concerned about religion, knows and has attained in it, still you will find him the more sensible of this state of things. This is but a hint of what might have been said. But we have rather chosen

to

to offer a general scheme of the argument from experience, which every one, from his own private reading and reflections, may illustrate with observations and particular instances, than to insist upon it at large, which would have required a volume.*

XI. DEISTS proved to be defective in INTEGRITY and real WISDOM, or the shocking ABSURDITIES which clog and ruin the DEISTICAL SCHEME.

We shall now proceed to shew that infidels are guilty, not only of the most destructive folly and madness with respect to themselves, but of cruelty to mankind, and of inveterate spite against God; and consequently that they ought to be rationally opposed by the united force of all good men upon earth.

Let it be farther premised, that we will have nothing to do in this paper with any deist, unless he believes the *existence* of a God, the *immortality* of the *soul*, the eternal difference between *vice* and *virtue*, and a *future state* of happiness or misery. With regard to those infidels, who deny the above articles of *natural religion*, as they live like beasts, we disdain to enter for one moment into any dispute with them.

1. A deist is obliged to confess, that God is a being infinitely good, that he has a free *ardent*
will

* The above views are taken from Mr. Halyburton, 4to. 1714.

will to make his creatures truly happy to the full extent of their capacities.

That He is a being full of kind affections, ardent passions to do us good, and tender forcible inclinations to please our souls.

That, from an inward principle of good-will, he exerts his active power, in diffusing happiness far and wide through the vast extent of creation, in rich and plentiful proportions, to the different capacities of his creatures, which are the proper objects of goodness, and the proper subjects of happiness.

Deists are forced to allow, that his intentions and active powers terminate in doing good for its own sake, as his proper object and last end; in which design and operation God's heart rests for ever with high satisfaction and joy.

That He has a strong propensity to do good with infinite delight, resting in the action of doing good most freely, without any other motive or inducement, but merely to shew how immensely kind and good he is, and can be, to his creatures; and that his utmost goodness can be exerted eternally in our highest happiness and fulness of enjoyment.

Deists are obliged to confess, that God has suffered mankind, in every age and nation, for five thousand seven hundred years, to remain
under

under much ignorance and darkness; to labour under many wretched prejudices; to be guilty of horrid vices, rebellious madness, and shocking murders; and to plunge themselves into terrible miseries, without affording them any kind of aid or supernatural assistance; that is, God has never afforded them any sort of help, light, or assistance, beyond the bare power of their own reason, the laws and power of the civil magistrate, and the advice and maxims of those few philosophers that have appeared in some parts of the world. Now, who can reconcile these three ideas, the rich goodness of God, the horrid state of mankind, and his refusing to give them any effectual aid in misery?

2. *Deists are forced to assert, that the book called the Bible, was every word of it invented and written by men that had no help from God.*—That not one idea or thought was infused by the wisdom and goodness of God; but that this book, the sole invention of men, was offered to mankind, and attested in such a manner, so full of apparent strong evidence; and yet the book itself is utterly false.

The prophecies are all false, there never was one true prophecy given from God; and if there is no true prediction, so, on the other hand, there can be no true fulfilment; but all the pretended prophecies were written after the events took place.

All the miracles were either never done at all, or were mere tricks of art, sleights of hand, or vile juggle and combination between Moses and the Egyptians, between Christ and the Jews.

Although the doctrine, in many respects, appears to be good, and the morality so pure, yet it never came from God, any more than the writings of Cicero, or Seneca, or Mahommed.

And as to the moral character of the penmen, however appearing good, yet at bottom they were all vile rogues, deceivers, and liars.

3. *Deists are obliged to assert, that a great part of the sensible, learned, and virtuous world have been suffered by God to live and die under a total delusion.*—That the greatest geniuses of Britain have been deluded and deceived all their days: the great Bacons, Boyles, Lockes, Newtons, Miltons, of the past and present age, have been deluded fools, and silly enthusiasts; they have embraced the scriptures as a divine revelation from God, when there is no such thing as a revelation, it is all a lye; it is all mere cheat and falsehood; and yet Bacon, Locke, and Newton, never did, or never could, discover the cheat.

What bold and absurd men are these deists, to dare set up their understanding above Bacon, Locke, and Sir Isaac Newton? when it is evident, that any one of these worthy and great men will

weigh down all that deists have either said or written, or can say to the end of the world.

4. *Deists are obliged, on their own scheme, to assert, that all the persons employed in delivering the doctrines and laws of the Bible, have imposed upon us by known deceit, and designed wilful imposture, and all without any prospect of riches or advantages to themselves.*

They are obliged to maintain, that these men, the writers of the Bible, were guilty of the vilest wickedness upon no motive, but to be undone in this world, and be damned for lying in the next, unless they were such hardened atheists and fools as to disbelieve a future state.

5. Deists are forced to assert and believe, that all these *impostors* and *cheats*, the writers of the Bible, all united in the same black and *horrid designs* to invent monstrous lies, and impose them upon the world in the name of God, and go on telling lies in the name of God; and that none of them did ever recant and discover the fraud, no, not even Judas himself, who was strongly obliged to it: * that neither the love of life, nor the terrors of dreadful deaths, which were their usual lot, had any influence upon them to make them confess the truth: but still these vile stubborn

* Read Mr. Bonar, on the Life and Character of Judas Iskariot, as an evidence of the truth and inspiration of the christian religion. Pr. 64.

born wretches persisted in their testimony concerning their doctrine and mission from God to the last breath.

6. Deists are irresistibly forced, upon this *glaring absurdity*, to confess, that these authors and inventors of the Bible did, in the midst of their wickedness, and with a guilty consciousness of their own lyes, *set themselves to do the greatest good in the world*; that is, deliver the most excellent doctrines and morals in the name of God, though they knew they were telling abominable lyes all the time.

That these men published the most excellent ideas of God's nature and perfections, and the most refined and compleat body of morals and motives, such as have the highest use and tendency to promote the honour of God's moral character, and the true happiness of mankind.

That here are a company of the vilest lyars and rogues, the worst of men in the world, doing the greatest good in the world; and that with death and horrid damnation before their eyes, acting with a certain prospect of the greatest present evils and terrible sufferings for themselves and all their followers, and without the least hope of future honours, riches, or comforts, either in this world, or in a future state.

7. The deists are forced to assert, with impudence and absurdity, that these authors of the Bible,

Bible, these deceivers and cheats, were able, without any human advantages of learning and eloquence, to dazzle and *persuade*; or of *subtlety* and craft, to inveigle and *intice*; of worldly arms and *power*, to *terrify*; or of *riches*, to *bribe*: yet that these men did persuade millions of mankind to believe their fables and lyes; and, upon terms of severe self-denial and painful sufferings, embrace the doctrines and stories which these vile fellows had invented of their own heads.

8. Deists are obliged, with a *shameless front*, to assert, that all the professed experience, which thousands and millions of *sober, grave, learned, and wise men*, have had of the truth and the divinity of the Bible, and of its power to convince, reform, and change mankind, and to comfort them in their greatest distresses and sorrows, to direct them in the worst difficulties, and guide them in the most doubtful cases, was *all a lie or a delusion*.

That all their experience is a foolish mistake, or a vile pretence, because no man in the world ever had any comfort or direction from God by means of the Bible.

9. Deists are inevitably forced to assert *, that there is a sovereign, wise, and good God at the head of the world, the constant and omnipresent governor of the universe, the *accurate inspector* of all human actions and thoughts; and that *this*
great

* See Mr. Bennett's Sermons on Inspiration, 8vo. 1730. p. 285.

great God has stood by, and looked on every moment, and has seen this horrid delusion prevail; has known, to the bottom, a vile lying imposture to spread for 1700 years, yea, above 3000 years, amongst the best and most pious of mankind; and yet God has never interposed for its defeat; but, instead thereof, has, by surprising operations and events, given open favour to the Bible.

10. Deists, with astonishing rudeness and assurance, are irresistibly obliged to maintain, that, although the Bible is a *mass of lies*, and the product either of *rascally imposture* or *mad enthusiasm*, yet the discovery of this falsehood remains the peculiar privilege and *honour* of the *deists only*, who are the alone men of sagacity to find out, and of honesty to expose, the vile scheme of lying and roguery.

Deists, according to their own assertion, are the only men endowed with keen and strong understandings, and refined taste, to distinguish between truth and error.

These are the only men that have the proper share of honesty and honour to profess and own the truth, and to declare the lies of the Bible!

Deists are the only men of the most penetrating minds in the world, the most elevated and powerful geniuses that ever lived amongst mankind; they are, if you believe them, the judicious and honest few,

few, who alone are the sensible, upright, courageous men to detect falsehood, unravel delusion, discern error, and expose imposition: the only friends to mankind, and bravely bold to declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and to own it in the midst of crafty and knavish fellows, and wild mad enthusiasts, who publish these lies amongst the deluded multitude, who are such fools as to believe what knaves and madmen tell them concerning the gospel.

RECAPITULATION.

Thus have we shewn, in opposition to the deistical scheme, that the light of nature in the works of GOD, and the reason of man, are insufficient to discover GOD clearly and fully to the soul, to direct us in the true worship of GOD, to make known a compleat system of morality, and to discover effectual motives to virtue.—Reason is likewise insufficient to discern the pardon of sin, the sanctification of the soul, and powerful supports under the troubles of life, and the approaches and terrors of death.—We have also taken a sixfold view of the experience of the whole world, as a striking evidence of the insufficiency of reason to lead man to eternal happiness in GOD:—Lastly, we have exposed the madness and folly of the deistical scheme to that contempt and scorn which it deserves from all sensible

sensible and honest men in the world, by shewing the glaring absurdities and shocking consequences which attend that scheme, and must sink it to eternity.

On this ground true christians triumph over all their enemies; we bid defiance to our boldest adversaries; we fear them not, yea, we dare them to the fight; we will meet them at any time, and have no dread of the issue of the hottest conflict. O! believers, rejoice! your cause is good, your victory is sure: you are built on the eternal and immutable rock of truth; and the gates of hell, i. e. the artifices of all the infidels in the world, shall never prevail against you. The church has been ever assaulted, and always triumphant.— But, at present, I must close. In the next Contemplation, we shall shew farther grounds of triumph; when we will endeavour clearly to state the nature and display the evidences of the inspiration of the holy scriptures.

Read the following BOOKS on the subject
of the above DISSERTATION.

1. HALYBURTON's incomparable Treatise against the Deists, 4to. 1714.—This book was never valued equal to its worth and usefulness. I defy all the deists on earth to give a solid answer to it.

2. DR. LELAND's VIEW of the Deistical Writers, 3 vols. 8vo.—This is a most entertaining and instructive work: I wish some able author would give us a like work on the Socinian Writers, with an Account of the principal answers to their errors by the ablest champions of the church of God.

3. DR. LELAND's last great work on the NECESSITY of REVELATION, 2 vols. 8vo.—This book has had no answer, and I am persuaded it never will meet with a solid confutation.

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A
CONTEMPLATION
ON THE
NATURE AND EVIDENCES
OF THE
INSPIRATION
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES.

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A CONTEMPLATION
ON THE
NATURE AND EVIDENCES
OF
INSPIRATION.

It is possible for GOD to communicate IDEAS to the human MIND.—He can make himself known to be GOD alone that speaks.—He excited the MINDS of the sacred PENMEN to write.—He infused the THOUGHTS and MATTER of the SCRIPTURE into their SOULS.—He preserved their rational FACULTIES in SERENITY and regular ORDER.—He secured them from all ERRORS, and guarded them from making any MISREPRESENTATION of FACTS.—The REALITY of their INSPIRATION demonstrated from the sublime GOODNESS and TENDENCY of the DOCTRINES, LAWS, and PROMISES.

INSPIRATION is the infusion of the thoughts and words of the scripture into the minds of the prophets and apostles, by the Spirit of GOD.

The DIVINE AUTHORITY of the scriptures is their right and power to demand obedience in the name of GOD.

Divine inspiration consists in the wise and gracious impression and influence of the spirit of God on the rational soul or mind of man, whereby, or by which influence, the soul was enlarged in its apprehensions or conceptions concerning the perfections, intentions, and operations of God, in much higher degrees than it could have attained by reflection upon its own natural ideas, or by education and reasoning, however exerted or improved in any way whatsoever.

The divine authority of the sacred scriptures, is that peculiar and distinguishing right they have to be treated and regarded by men as true and awfully divine.

The immediate ground or foundation of this divine authority is, that God is their original author, source, and end : from him they came, concerning his nature and councils they treat, and to him they lead as their ultimate scope or end ; in his glory they conspire and terminate for ever.

As God is the author or fountain of the holy scriptures, so his most sublime and awful perfections are the only basis or foundation of their divine authority.

The sincerity and veracity of God demands and deserves to be credited in whatever it declares or foretells.

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The immutable faithfulness, and inflexible justice of God, exact our regards and assent in whatever he proclaims and publishes as his own sentiments and thoughts; and require the most grateful reception of the good that he promises, and the most awful reverence of all the evil that he threatens.

His boundless power and dominion over his reasonable creatures demand immediate obedience to all the laws he reveals; and his infinite goodness and mercy require from us the most grateful acknowledgment for all the blessings he bestows.

The obligation that arises from the divine authority of the scriptures is eternal, immutable, and supreme; therefore it gives way to nothing, and ever remains inviolable.

Such is the perfection and excellence of the sacred scriptures in themselves; and, considered in their own intrinsic purity and goodness, that they stand on their own basis abundantly self-supported, nor can any recommendations of men, or angels equal their own.

The Bible intrinsically deserves, that all rational beings submit to its authority, and be governed by it wherever it is published in the world.

As every will ought to adore it, so every understanding ought to fall down before its authority, or its right to demand obedience in the name of God.

To

To refuse subjection to divine revelation, when clearly seen and known, is to be looked upon with horror, as the very essence of rebellion against God.

It is the most malignant and daring treason against the majesty of God.

It is violating the great and fundamental law of heaven and earth : it is striking at the foundation of all the authority that is in God ; of all the rights that reside in his eternal nature and perfections ; even the throne of God rests on the credit of the scripture, and all his awful prerogative * is supported by it.

In short, revelation, objectively considered, is not only amiable, but venerable, sacred, and divine. It is not only the rule of man's temper and actions, but it is the sole rule and plan of God's own actions, which would render it sacred if it were not so of itself ; but, moreover, it is divine in the strictest sense ; all necessary truth being an essential efflux, or emanation, from the infinite and all-perfect mind.

Hence the Bible appears not only possessed of the highest worth, beauty, and excellence ; but invested with a supreme and absolute authority, not only attractive, but really awful ; of which no other account can be given than the divine-

ness

* The PREROGATIVE of God consists in his dignity or royal character, including personal sovereignty, absolute perfection, perpetual dominion or eternity of empire over all,

ness of the object. Every ray of truth and reason in divine revelation does really participate of the majesty of that God to whom truth and reason all belongs, and whose attribute reason is.

This is a view of scripture which ought never to be forgotten or disregarded for one moment ; that every ray of truth in the law participates of the unspotted holiness, justice, and majesty of God : and every ray of truth in the gospel participates of the glorious goodness, beauty, and love of that God, whose brightest resemblance and mirror the gospel is for ever.

The result of the above thoughts must be, that the divine authority of the holy scriptures consists in their right and power to declare the truth of doctrines ; to proclaim the most pure and extensive laws ; to make exceeding great and precious promises ; to denounce the most terrible threatenings ; to give out predictions of future events ; to exhibit the most beautiful examples, and disclose the most astonishing glories in the name of the sovereign and eternal God ; and to command in a moment the most hearty assent to the truth, the deepest subjection of soul and conscience to the will of God, as the redeemer, rewarder, and judge of immortal souls.

Having thus declared what we mean by inspiration and divine authority, and given you a short view of the ground or foundation of that

authority, let us proceed, by regular and easy steps, to consider the nature of inspiration more at large, till we attain a clear and comprehensive conception of so important and sublime an object.

We shall then go on to consider the evidences of inspiration ; and thus, by the help of God, rise up to absolute and invincible demonstration.

I. A REVELATION from GOD is possible, or it is possible for GOD to have an intimate INTERCOURSE with the human MIND ; and he can communicate IDEAS of TRUTH to the SOUL.

A revelation involves no contradiction or disagreement of ideas, in the nature of the thing. There is in the idea of inspiration no contradiction to the nature of God, or the nature of man.

There is no repugnancy of ideas, or disagreement with the attributes of God, and the nature and powers of reason in man.

GOD is a spiritual being ; he is a living intelligent being, invisible to human eyes.—The soul is an equally invisible being, in a state of active existence, endued with understanding, or a capacity of receiving ideas, and discerning the nature and differences of things.

GOD is a thinking being : man is a thinking being. GOD is invisible life : man's soul is invisible life. GOD is a perceptive existence : man's
soul

soul is a perceptive existence. Almighty God has a capacity of forming ideas of all things: the soul has a capacity of receiving ideas of all things.

God is the sole author and fountain of all our rational powers: from him we derive the existence of our souls, and all their capacities of receiving ideas and discerning truth and error.

Without his ever-present agency, our souls are all weakness, darkness, and confusion; we can make no progress at all in the attainment of knowledge and truth.

Now, as God is an omnipresent mind; as he is all thought and consciousness; as he has the nearest access to all the spirits he has made at all times, and in all places; as he has unlimited presence, power, and knowledge himself; and as he infused our conversible powers into us at first, and supports them every moment by his agency; shall he not be able to converse with the souls he has made; is the parent of all spirits intimately present with every mind or thoughtful being in his whole empire, and cannot he have the most intimate and intense access to his own offspring? and so intimate as to assure the soul, that it is God himself that speaks with such clearness, energy, and evidence, as shall make it absurd to deny, and impossible to doubt of the voice of God to the soul.

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If

If men can make themselves known to each other by their words, as the copy of their thoughts; if they can discover their secret sentiments and feelings to each other, even such secret thoughts which could never be known by the utmost acuteness and sagacity;

Surely God can make himself known to man, in his perfections and counsels, far beyond the light of our reason. For if we deny this, we plainly suppose and assert this wretched absurdity, That God's knowledge, presence, and ability of mind is more bounded than man's capacity; and that the ever-present and ever-active God wants a real excellence and perfection, of which his creature man is possessed. Can any man believe this that is endowed with common sense and reason?

Will any person object the invisible nature of God, as that which renders it impossible?

Let such objectors consider the following thoughts:

God has made men capable of infusing their ideas and intentions into other men, and receiving infusions of ideas, images, and passions from other men: although the agent or soul of every man is invisible to the senses of all mankind, all souls are equally invisible as God himself.

As the souls of three hundred millions of men on earth are invisible, and yet they can infuse trains of good or bad thoughts, images, and ideas into each other every day, and every hour, for sixty or seventy years together,

Is it then absurd, or contrary to reason, to suppose the supreme omnipresent mind can infuse good ideas, holy thoughts, and heavenly images or notions, and sacred notices of himself and his glories and counsels, although this great mind, this omnipresent soul be of an invisible nature as the soul of man?

Can the mind of man be incapable of receiving any ideas or notices from the almighty and omnipresent mind, only or merely because that supreme mind is invisible? Can any man be so silly and absurd as to assert and believe this?

What? Can our invisible minds communicate ideas to each other for seventy years together; and is the supreme mind shut out from this capacity, and divested of this power?

What? Can not the invisible, ever-active, ever-present, rational mind of God, that fills all worlds at once, give discoveries of his thoughts to the rational and invisible minds of men, which he himself has created, and every moment sustains in existence, powers, and consciousness?

Is God the only being that is thus limited and

shut out from the converse with spirits, and the instruction of immortal souls ?

Has man a capacity of infusing thoughts into ten thousand souls at once : and is God excluded from the souls of the creatures he has made, and every moment sustains ?

II. GOD can speak to the soul with such LIGHT and FORCE as shall distinguish his voice from all CREATURES in the world.

He can speak with such light and evidence, or can make such clear appearances of truth to the soul as shall proclaim him to be God alone.—God's light makes such discoveries of himself to man, and of man's own soul to himself, which no creatures can ever make.

God can make man know his excellent purity, beauty, and dreadful grandeur ; and can discover man's debased, deformed heart, as shall astonish and confound the soul itself at its own ugliness.

That divine and celestial light, whereby the sacred word evidences itself to the reasonable minds of those who have their eyes purged well from prejudices, to see and make an honest enquiry, is nothing else but the impress of the majesty, truth, omniscience, wisdom, holiness, justice, grace, mercy, and authority of God, stamped upon the scriptures by the Holy Spirit,
and

and beaming or shining into the minds of such persons upon their hearing or perusal, and affecting them with a sense of those perfections both in what is spoken, and in the majestic and God-becoming way of speaking: they speak as never man spake. The matter spoken, and the manner of speaking, has a greatness discernible by a spiritual understanding that satisfies it fully, that God is the speaker.

And all the impressions of God's wisdom, faithfulness, omniscience, and majesty, that are stamped upon the matter contained in the scriptures, being conveyed only by the word, do join the impressions that are upon the word, and strengthen the evidence they give of their divine original, since these impressions do not otherwise appear to our minds, or affect them, than by the word.

The sacred scriptures, by a God-becoming manifestation of the truth that scorns all these little and mean arts of insinuation, by fair and enticing words, and artificially dressed up arguments, with other the like confessions of human weakness, that are in all human writings, commends itself to the conscience, dives into the souls of men, into all the secret recesses of their hearts; guides, teaches, directs, determines, and judges in them, and upon them, in the name, majesty, and authority of God: and when it
enters

enters thus into the soul, it fills it with the light of the glory of the beamings of those perfections upon it, whereby it is made to cry out, "The voice of God, and not of man."

The glorious and wonderful power, whereby the sacred scripture evidences itself to be the word of God and not of man, is nothing else but that authority and awful efficacy which God puts forth in and by it over the minds and consciences of men, working divinely, and producing effects of his glorious and omnipresent power in immortal souls.

It enters into the conscience, a territory or province exempt from the authority of creatures, and subject only to the dominion of God: it challenges, convinces, threatens, awakens, and sets the conscience a roaring; and the whole creation cannot quiet it again: it commands a calm, and the sea that was troubled before is smooth, and devils and men are not able to disturb its repose.

It enters into the mind, opens its eyes, fills it with glorious, clear, pure, purifying light, and sets before it wonders before unknown and undiscerned in counsel and knowledge, concerning God, ourselves, our sin, our duty, our danger, and our relief; the works, the ways, the counsels, and purposes of God.

It

It speaks with efficacy to the will, converts it and powerfully disengages it from what it was most connected with, what it embraced and was even glued to before; so that no art or force of eloquence, argument, fear, or hope, could make it quit its hold: it makes the will hastily quit its embraces of impure objects, and turns its bent another way, the quite opposite road to the former, and with open arms embraces what nothing could make it look to before. This power of God's word takes away the aversion of the will, makes it willingly go, yea, run after what it bore the greatest aversion to before, and obstinately refuse to close with any sinful and abominable object.

It enters the affections, makes them rise from the earth and sensual enjoyments; gives them such a divine touch, that though they may, through their fickle and volatile nature, be carried sometimes by force another way; yet they never rest, but point heaven-ward, and dart upwards like heavenly fire.

This glorious word of God comes into the soul, sunk under the pressure of unspeakable and irretrievable distress, sticking in the miry clay, refusing comfort, and, in appearance, capable of none: the promise of God plucks the soul out of the clay, raises it out of the horrible pit, sets its feet upon a rock, fills it with joy, yea, makes

it exceeding joyful; while, even, all outward pressures and tribulations continue, yea, are increased.

The word enters into the soul, lays hold on the reigning lusts to which all the powers and passions had formerly submitted, and that with ardour; and condemns those powerful and daring criminals, makes the soul throw off the yoke, and join in the execution of its sentence against and on them.

Now, where the case is thus stated, how can the soul that feels this powerful word, that comes from the Lord most high, do otherwise than fall down and own, "That God is in it of a truth." *

Stile is the manner in which any person expresses the conceptions of his mind, and the passions of his heart, by means of language.

Thus the stile of God is the manner in which he expresses his conceptions and affections in the language of the holy scriptures.

Our writers on eloquence observe, that there are three kinds of stile amongst mankind—the simple stile—the middle or equable and temperate—and the sublime. All these kinds of stile God has condescended to use in the scriptures, and in each of them he speaks like a God.

When

* Read Halyburton's nervous and admirable Essay on the Reason of Faith.

When he is pleased to use the simple and plain style, he speaks with the utmost justness and propriety—and in the most lively and engaging manner, so as to allure the imagination and fix the affections, with the most lovely elegance, or such a proper choice of words and expressions which always suit the ideas that God designed to convey. His style hath the utmost purity both in the words and expressions—and perspicuity, which serves very much to keep up the attention, where other ornaments are wanting.—A seeming negligence is sometimes a beauty in this style, as it appears more natural. •

When God chuses to express himself in the middle or temperate style, you see his conceptions and affections expressed with the utmost gravity and dignity—you see the finest thoughts in the truest beauty and elegance—you observe in all his ideas and expressions a delicacy peculiar to a God.

As in the objects of our senses, those things are said to be delicate which affect us gradually in a soft and agreeable manner; so a delicate thought revealed from God, is that, which is not wholly discovered at once, but, by degrees, opening and unfolding itself to the mind, discloses more than was at first perceived; just as the minute works of creation, when they are viewed

with

• See Dr. WARD'S Lectures on Oratory, vol. II. p. 129—178.

with a careless eye, they are regarded with a stupid indifference; but, when examined nicely with a good microscope, we explore new wonders on every fresh survey.

The fine thoughts of GOD have the attractive property of NOVELTY. Mankind is naturally pleased with new things; and when, at the same time, they are set in an agreeable light, this very much heightens the pleasure.

In all the parts of the scripture we have new wonders of God's perfections, intentions, and operations—new events of providence rising into view—new characters of great and wise and good men attracting our attention, and commanding our wonder, esteem, and imitation—new prospects of future worlds of happiness or misery rise before us.

If we consider the SUBLIME STYLE of the Bible, we have ten thousand glories which burst in upon our attentive and ravished souls with a brighter radiance than the starry heavens in the clearest night.

In the sacred writers of the OLD and NEW TESTAMENT, we have innumerable passages which rise to the utmost degree of sublimity.

In the divine authors, the words are ennobled by the vigour and brightness of the sense, contrary to the manner of many other authors, where the diction and ornaments of speech chiefly contribute

tribute to the sublimity; whilst the thoughts themselves are poor, low, common, and groveling, if taken naked, and stripped of the fine language.

The **SUBLIME** is a just, grand, and wonderful thought; a striking image or conception of a great soul.

It strikes with the force of thunder, with a conquering voice; and with the terrible glory of lightening, with a rapid and irresistible fire.*

It appears beautiful either in the plain or figurative style: it admits all the ornaments of language, yet needs none of them; but commands and triumphs in its own native strength and majesty.

The true sublime will bear translation into all languages, and will be great and surprizing in all languages, and to all persons of understanding and judgment, notwithstanding the difference of their country, education, interest, and party.

It carries all before it by its own strength, and does not so much raise persuasion in the hearer or reader, as throw him into a delightful rapture or pleasing surprize, and transport him out of himself.

We admire it at first, without considering; and, upon mature consideration, we are convinced that we can never admire it too much.

* BLACKWALL'S Sacred Classics, vol. I.

It defies opposition, envy, and time; it triumphs over all resistance, and is infinitely advanced above cavil and criticism.

The sublime, says Longinus, is an image reflected from the greatness of the soul.

The sublime, in the scripture, is an image reflected from the greatness of God's soul in his conceptions, volitions, and affections.

'Tis the copy of God's heart in his doctrines, laws, threatenings, and promises.

An inward grandeur, vigour, and fire in God, is the common centre, from whence every ray of the sublime, either in thought, action, or expression, is darted out.

LONGINUS gives us two marks or characters, whereby we may know the true sublime; and both of them appear in all their resplendent glory in the writings of God.

I. CHARACTER.

That is just, great, and wonderfully sublime, which, the more we consider it, the greater ideas we conceive of it, and the more lively sensations we receive from it, whose force we cannot withstand, which sinks deep, and makes powerful impressions on the mind.

II. CHARACTER.

That is truly sublime in composition, which, whenever you hear or read it, always gives the same

same pleasure to a reader or hearer of TRUE TASTE, as if he himself had been the author of it. It causes even envy and cavilling to die away in the confluence of sweetness and rapture we feel.

BOILEAU describes the true sublime thus: "It is a certain fire and force in discourse, proper to elevate, transport, and to command the soul; and which proceeds, (1) from greatness and elevation of thought, and inward dignity and nobleness of feelings; or, (2) from magnificence of words, expressive images, and striking figures; or, (3) from an harmonious, lively, and animated force of expression.

"That is to say, from any one of these particulars regarded separately, or what perfectly makes the sublime from these three glorious particulars taken together." *

Let us now proceed, on the principles and rules of these great masters in eloquence, to give some specimens of the true sublime in the writings of the Bible; and let us see if there are not strong and convincing marks and evidences of the conceptions and genius of a God running through the various parts of this sacred and immortal volume.

Let all that have eyes, or ears, or sense, or taste, see if these are the words of a man, or
the

* Smith's Longinus, 8vo.

the inventions of impostors, or enthusiasts, and madmen.

I. SPECIMEN.

From the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses.

God said, what? Let there be light, and there was light.—Most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.—Joseph is a fruitful bough.—I am that I am.—This is the finger of God.—Thus saith the LORD God, in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up.—I will get me honour upon Pharaoh.—Who is a GOD like unto thee, glorious in holiness; fearful in praises: doing wonders.—Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy, and mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the mount quaked greatly: and when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

Note, This xixth chapter of Exodus contains actions and words the most dreadfully sublime that ever entered into the conceptions of man; 'tis superior to all criticism, and defies all censure.—See a beautiful and devout illustration of this, and the xxth chapter, by Dr. Watts, in his Lyric Poems; which must astonish and please all persons who have eyes, or ears, or common sense.

GOD

GOD spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God ; which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. " THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME."

And all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking ; and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off ; and they said unto Moses, " Speak thou with us, and we will hear ; but let not God speak with us, LEST WE DIE." And Moses said, God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not : and the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

They saw the God of Israel—under his feet a paved work of sapphire stone. Numbers xvi.

O ! God, the God of the spirits of all flesh—if these men die the common death of all men—then the Lord hath not sent me. God is not a man that he should lie : neither the son of man, that he should repent : hath he said, and shall he not do it ? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good ?

How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed ? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied ?

The words of Balaam are so sublime, so elegant, and admirably finished, that we must heartily agree to the observation of Dr. Lowth, in his incomparable *Prælectiones*. *Prælect. xx. p. 273. 8vo. 1763.*—Addam unum ex illis Balaami vaticiniis, quæ modo memoravi, et quorum sæpius mentionem facio: nihil enim habet poësis hebræa, in ullo genere limatius, aut exquisitius. Hoc autem, de quo loquor, abundat lætissimis ac splendidissimis imaginibus a natura petitis; ipso etiam colore ac flore quodam dictionis, et figurarum varietate, præcipue elucet. Hoc si nunc, aut si quæ aliquando alia, experiar, an Latino carmine adumbrari possint, vestræ erit humanitatis, Academici, conatus nostros in meliorem partem accipere.

Tuis, Jacobe, quantus est castris decor !
 Tuisque signis, Israel !
 Ut rigua vallis fertilem pandens sinum,
 Horti ut scatentes rivulis;
 Sacris Edenæ costi ut in sylvis virent,
 Cedrique propter flumina.
 Illi uda multo rore stillant germina,
 Fœtusque alunt juges aquæ.
 Sancti usque fines promovebit imperi
 Rex usque victor hostium.
 Illum subactò duxit ab Nilo Deus,
 Novis superbum viribus,
 Qualis remotis liber in jugis oryx

Fert

Fert celsa coelo cornua.

Vorabit hostes ; ossa franget ; irritas

Lacerabit hastas dentibus.

Ut leo, recumbit ; ut læna, decubat ;

Quis audeat laceßere ?

Quæ quisque tibi precabitur, ferat bona !

*Mala quæ precabitur, luat ! **

You are this day as the stars of heaven ! He has took you out of the furnace.—Thy God is a consuming fire.—If the Lord's wrath be kindled, and ye quickly perish.—Cursed, cursed, cursed, cursed, no less than eighteen times.—Cursing and vexation.—The Lord shall make thy plagues wonderful.—Give ear, O ! heavens,—hear, O ! earth,—ascribe ye greatness to our God.—A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell ; and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.—I will spend mine arrows upon them.—I kill. I make alive. I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever.—If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgment : I will render to mine enemies : and will reward them that hate me.—I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh.—Happy art thou, O ! Israel ; who is like unto thee, O ! people,

* A translation of Dr. Lowth's beautiful latin verses shall be given at the end of the Contemplations on the Inspiration of Scripture.

people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help : and who is the sword of thy excellency ! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee ; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

That man must be dead to all true and sublime taste, who cannot see and relish, and delight in the above specimen of the grandeur and majesty of the stile of the holy scriptures !

II. SPECIMEN.

From Joshua to the end of Job.

Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one good thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you : all are come to pass unto you ; and not one thing hath failed thereof.—As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.

Hear, O ! ye kings ; give ear, O ! ye princes : I will sing unto the Lord : I will sing praise to the LORD GOD of Israel. Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water : the mountains melted from before the Lord ; even that Sinai, from before the LORD GOD of Israel.—They fought from heaven ; the stars, in their courses, fought against Sisera ; the river Kishon swept them away ; that ancient river, the river Kishon : O ! my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.

So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord ! but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.

But will God, in very deed, dwell with men on the earth ! Behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee ; how much less this house which I have built !

Thou, even thou, art Lord alone ; thou hast made heaven ; the heaven of heavens, with all their host ; the earth, and all things that are therein ; the seas, and all that is therein : and thou preservest them all : and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. — Then a SPIRIT passed before my face ; the hair of my flesh stood up ; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof : an image was before mine eyes : there was silence. — And I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God ? Shall a man be more pure than his maker ? — or, as the original hebrew ought to be translated, “ Shall mortal man be justified by God, or be just before God : shall a man be pure with or before his maker ? ” — Behold, he putteth no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly :

how much less on them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth, or like the moth!—God doth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number.—Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.—Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered?—He overturneth the mountains in his anger; he makes the pillars of the earth tremble; he commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.—He alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; he doth great things past finding out, and wonders without number. Who can hinder him? who will say to him, what dost thou?

Man is of a few days, and full of trouble: he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also like a shadow, and continueth not.

Man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more.—O! earth, cover not thou my blood.—The thunder of his power, who can understand? Terrors shall take hold on him; (viz.) the sinner, like waters.—With God is terrible majesty.—God thundereth marvellously
with

with his voice.—Dost thou know the wondrous works of him that is perfect in knowledge?—Stand still, O! *Job*, and consider the wondrous works of God!

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?—when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?—or who shut up the sea with doors?—and said, Hitherto thou shalt come, and no farther: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.—Have the gates of death been opened to thee, or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, here we are: who can number the clouds in wisdom, or who can stay the bottles of heaven?

Hast thou clothed the horse's neck with thunder?—Doth the eagle mount up at thy command?

Hast thou an arm like *Gob*, or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

III. SPECIMEN.

From the book of Psalms.

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength!—in my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled: the

the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils; and fire out of his mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down, and darkness was under his feet: and he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he flew on the wings of the wind.—The Lord also thundered in the heavens: and the Highest gave his voice hail-stones and coals of fire.—He sent out his arrows—he shot out lightnings—then the channels of the waters were seen—the foundations of the world were discovered, at thy rebuke, O! Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils: he sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters!

Lift up your heads, O! ye gates; and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. Who is the king of glory? the Lord strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle—the Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory!

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the vast expanse sheweth his handy work!—The sun, as a bridegroom in his beauty, comes out of his chamber; and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

The SUBLIME and PATHETIC united:
I am poured out like water, all my bones are
out

out of joint—my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels—my strength is dried up—my tongue cleaveth to my jaws, I am brought down to the dust of death, dogs compassed me—they pierced my hands and my feet—I may tell all my bones, they look and stare upon me—they parted my garments, and for my vesture they cast lots.

IV. SPECIMEN.

From the Psalms.

Give to the Lord, O! ye mighty; give unto Jehovah glory and strength—the voice of the Lord is upon the waters—the God of glory thundereth—the voice of the Lord is powerful—the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars—the voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire; i. e. the thunder and lightnings directed by the eye and hand of God—the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh—the voice of the Lord discovereth the forest—the Lord sitteth king for ever.

Note, That this psalm ends all this dreadful thunder and terror, with the perfect safety and strong consolation to all true believers: “The Lord will give strength to his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.” How soothing, and how sweet a comfort is this to all that love and fear God!

Thy

Thy throne, O ! God, is for ever and ever !—
gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O ! most mighty
—ride prosperously—thy right hand shall teach
the terrible things—thine arrows are sharp in
the hearts of thine enemies.—N. B. This con-
queror always reaches the very heart; the people
fall before his face; they cannot flee away as
they often do before other conquerors !

V. SPECIMEN.

From the Psalms.

The mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken
—out of Sion, the perfection of beauty, God
hath shined—our God shall come, and shall not
keep silence : a fire shall devour before him, and
it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

The great Fenelon, of Cambray, says, “ Never
did any greek or latin ode reach the loftiness of
this psalm : it surpasses the utmost stretch of hu-
man invention.”

*Dialogues on Eloquence, p. 151. Edition of
Stevenson, 8vo. 1722.*

God is our refuge and strength ; a very present
help in trouble—we will not fear, though the
earth be removed ; though the mountains be
carried into the depths of the sea—there is a
river, the streams whereof make glad the city of
God—God shall help her, (i. e. the church)
and that right early.

This

This was the glorious psalm of Dr. Martin Luther, who used to say, on any fresh appearance of danger from his enemies, "Come, let us sing the 46th psalm, and then let them do their worst."

The sublime pathos of repentance was never better expressed than in the 51st psalm: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned—I was shapen in iniquity—deliver me from blood guiltiness—create in me a clean heart—wash me thoroughly from my sin—take not thy holy spirit from me—restore to me the joys of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free or princely SPIRIT !

The sublime contempt which God flings on all wicked men, is admirably expressed in the 62d psalm: "The sons of Adam, or the mean man, are vanity—the sons of the nobleman, (i. e. Ish, the great man) are a lie—to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity; or, as the hebrew originally expresses it, they go up sooner than vanity: that is, put vanity into one scale, and throw in men of low and high degree into the other scale, they will be altogether lighter than vanity itself.—Was ever such a picture of the worthless and insignificant character of bad men! What an infinite disdain does God express, in these words, for all worldly grandeur! What an ineffable contempt is poured on all the glory of all wicked men in

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their

their most flourishing state of honour and magnificence !

We shall give specimens of the sublime stile of the scriptures from the other psalms, from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the lesser prophets ; and from the New Testament, especially the book of Revelations, in another part of this work : at present we must, with great regret and reluctance, omit them, lest this head should be disproportionable to the following particulars, to which let us now address ourselves.

III. GOD stirred up or excited the PENMEN to write and publish the REVELATIONS OR DISCOVERIES which he made to their souls.

If we accurately trace out the principal motives which excite to writing and to action, we shall find that they are such as are addressed to fear, hope, gratitude, ambition, glory, shame, and pleasure. All these springs of action God worked upon when he excited the sacred penmen to write the discoveries of his perfections and operations in the holy scriptures.

1. FEAR is a serious and awful sense of the sovereign perfections of God, which inspires us with a dread of offending his majesty, and an ardent care of pleasing him in all things.

If ever any men in the world possessed the holy fear of God in a transcendent degree, the prophets

prophets and apostles were the men : they write with most sacred reverence of the supreme Being : they durst not for a moment displease him by refusing to write down his will : even a Balaam, (the only bad man that ever proclaimed any prophecies of the Old Testament) declares that if Balak would give him his house full of silver and gold, he could not conceal or diminish, or add to the words which God commanded him to speak.

If we enter into the spirit and temper of Moses, and the prophets and apostles, we may justly conclude, concerning each of them, that they had such feelings and thoughts as those which follow. Let us begin with Moses, in the wilderness : let us behold him taking up his pen to begin his first book, called Genesis : let us sit by him, or look over him, while he writes.

Did ever any man before, since the creation of the world, feel so much of the tremendous nature and majesty of God in his mind ? Did he not feel the whole weight of Deity upon his soul ? Did not he see God in his incomprehensible glory ? and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I do exceedingly fear and quake. *

Where shall we find such a great and venerable man : such a holy and heavenly writer in all the authors of the pagan world ?

2. HOPE.

* We must beg our readers to apply this thought to the other penmen.

2. HOPE.—This was another spring of action on which God worked, or operated, when he excited the sacred writers to record the discoveries of his heart. If we begin with Moses, we may easily conceive, that hope operated mightily in his bosom, when he was penning this book in the wilderness. He was at the head of two millions of people, for whose future happiness he was infinitely concerned; he saw a numerous race of children rising into existence, life, action, and immortality; he knew the weakness of human reason, and the unspeakable need of a revelation to lead them into the paths of wisdom, duty, and happiness: and, under the powerful impressions of God's spirit, he wrote discoveries, statutes, facts, predictions, promises, and threatenings, with the most exalted and vigorous hope of being the glorious instrument of promoting their present order, peace, and happiness, as well as of their future eternal salvation. Methinks, if we trace the emotions of his devout and generous heart, we shall find him strongly feeling such sentiments as these: "I am now penning down these thoughts, which I received from my God, for the use of this vast body of people: by this means I shall instruct, convince, persuade, and comfort millions yet unborn: I see, that, after I am dead, this people shall multiply as the stars of heaven," and

and as the sands on the sea shore : I see, that, through a period of fifteen hundred years, prodigious multitudes shall arise into existence, and receive unspeakable advantage from my writings."

3. GRATITUDE was another spring which operated powerfully in the bosoms of the sacred writers, while composing their immortal books for the service of the church in all ages. Gratitude is a lively sense of favours bestowed, with an ardent desire, or a passionate inclination, to make all possible returns of affection and service.

What a strong sense must Moses feel of the distinguishing goodness of God to himself ? and how mightily must this stir him up to the highest affection, and to the utmost readiness to serve the interest and glory of God in the world ? How must he wish, for forty years together, to spread abroad the knowledge, the glories, the justice, the grace, and the dominion of God amongst the millions of the Jewish tribes ? and how does this gratitude breathe in his precious writings ? particularly in the last book he wrote ; where every page is a shining evidence of ardent devotion and gratitude to his God.

What pathetic strains of gratitude live, and burn, and shine, in a thousand passages in the book of Psalms : what an overwhelming sense of the divine goodness ! what intense and vigorous affection ; even to such a transcendent eminence

as

as to appear above the powers and thoughts of mortal men ; and almost to rival the affections and devotion of the angels of God !

A person can hardly open the book of Psalms, but he must see an ardour of soul, which, considering it issues from the breasts of imperfect creatures, imprisoned in dust and ashes, may well nigh put angels to the blush, and stir them up to higher devotion, and more ardent and intense fire and praise.

What gratitude to GOD must ISAIAH feel ? that greatest of men, that sublime orator of GOD ! If ever there was a man highly distinguished above his fellow mortals, for four thousand years, this was the man ; this was the peculiar favourite of Heaven.

And if we look into the bosom of the divine apostle PAUL, what flames of gratitude burned in his soul for above thirty years together ; and how did it animate him to the most mighty efforts, by preaching, suffering, and by his writings, to diffuse the knowledge of the perfections and glories of his redeeming God.

If we were to search the breast of Peter, the vile back-slider, when once pardoned and restored, and filled with love and gratitude to his divine master, what wonders of grace and zeal should we here explore ! And can we imagine
that

that John, the beloved disciple, who had the honour to lean on his redeemer's breast; can we imagine that he would be behind his brothers Peter and Paul in gratitude to his God! In a word, the more we examine their tempers and devotion, the more we shall admire.

4. Honeſt and ſacred AMBITION animated the
MINDS of the PENMEN of the BIBLE.

Ambition is a mixt paſſion, made up of boundleſs admiration of an infinite good, and eternal deſire to poſſeſs that good as our own for ever.

Ambition is then only guilty, or criminal, in the eye of God, when it proceeds from a bad ſpring, and terminates in a wrong object: ſuch was the ambition of the devils, and of all the mighty wicked tyrants on the face of the whole earth, in the ſeveral ages and parts of the world.

But the ſacred writers were well purged from all this deteſtable and contemptible pride and vanity: their paſſions of wonder and deſire terminated on the ſupreme good, the infinite God. To have his approbation was their utmoſt aim and honour, beyond which they could not ſtretch a ſingle thought. To enjoy his love, and live under his ſmiles, was their higheſt happineſs; beyond which they could not exert one ſingle deſire. This gave the moſt ſublime ferment to all their paſſions and thoughts. I look into the
breſt

breast of Moses, and I see his passions all on fire: hope, gratitude, joy, and holy ambition, to approve himself to God, all blended together in one grand blaze of glory; and working him up to the highest pitch of rational zeal for the honour of the divine perfections, wishing, above all things, to meet the notice of his divine master's eye, and receive, at the final issue of his life and immortal writings, the eternal plaudit of his God.

As for the apostle Paul, he was the most ambitious man that ever lived in the world: and he avows it in the strongest terms, with regard to himself; and he exhorts others to follow him in the same glorious temper and disposition.

Thus he speaks in Rom. xv. 20. For it has been the object of my ambition * to preach the gospel. And in 2 Cor. v. 9. he avows it again: "Therefore we make it the height of our ambition, § that we may be well pleasing to Christ." And in 1 Thes. iv. 11. he thus exhorts his pupils: Make it your ambition † to live quietly. And in Titus iii. 14. he nobly says, "Let those that belong to us, learn to distinguish ‡ themselves in good works, or outstrip others, and stand before them in good works." And in Rom, ii. 7. he makes it the essential character of

* Philotimoumenon. § Philotimoumetha. † Philotimeisthai.

‡ Proisasthai.

of a true christian, That by a patient continuance in WELL DOING, he seeks for glory, * honour, and immortality ; that is, for immortal glory and honour in the present approbation, and in the eternal presence of God.

This naturally leads us to a more distinct consideration of another spring of action, which actuated the souls of the sacred writers, and which is so closely interwoven with the above, that it is almost needless to make it a distinct head, viz.

5. GLORY and SHAME.

Glory, as it exists in an immortal soul, is a mixed passion, made up of the highest joy and the most ardent self-love blended together in equal proportions.

'Tis a high-spirited joy in the greatest good, mixed with the strongest self love for my own soul, as connected with that best good.

A lively sense of my interest in this purest good acts upon my self-esteem of my own soul, and increases the force of it.—My self-valuation acts on the sense I have of my interest in the richest good, and increases the force of my joy in it ; and thus they re-act on each other, and increase the strength and fire of each.

My

* Doxan kai timen kai sphtharisan setousi.

My value for my own immortal soul makes me rejoice in my interest in Christ, the supreme good: and my joy in my interest in this infinite good, excites me to put an higher value on my own soul, which is endued with such wonderful and immortal powers, as renders me capable of an eternal possession and fruition of this good. This is loving myself in God and loving God in myself, as a creature capable of enjoying so vast a glory in the boundless and immortal existence of the first and best of all beings.

Now, if ever any men in the world were capable of this glory, the sacred writers were the men! if ever any men rejoiced in the supreme good, these were the men: if ever any men esteemed themselves as interested in God, these were the men: if ever any men had the strongest and highest self-valuation for their own souls, as connected with Christ, these were the men: if ever any men had a rich assemblage of the most resplendent virtues and graces, these were the men.

Whatever shining perfections have adorned human nature in any age of the world, whatever can constitute solid glory of character and real greatness of soul, is to be found in these sublime penmen of the sacred scriptures. And the more we examine the real internal characters of Moses, Isaiah, and Paul, the more we shall

be convinced of the truth and justice of the above reflections or assertions : nor will one character of all the penmen sink, but rise, on our severest scrutiny, into his whole life and character, down to the hour of his death.

Shame is a dread of censure and contempt, knowing that we have said or done something to deserve it.

'Tis a painful expectation of disgrace and scorn, arising from a consciousness that we have acted a vile and dishonourable part towards God, or our fellow-creatures ; or towards both.

'Tis a painful confusion of soul, on an apprehension of our being in great danger of losing our good name, and beauty of character, by our having done some secret foolish action, which is likely to come to open day-light, before our friends, our enemies, and all the world.

Shame is a passion made up of sorrow, self-love, and self-contempt, on our being suddenly found out and surprized in the action of a fool, or the baseness of a false-hearted villain.

'Tis the very opposite of glory, which is a mixture of pure strong joy in a great good, and an ardent self-love as connected with that good, and put into possession of it. But shame is a sense of our loss of this good, and a self-contempt on account of our having deserved that loss for ever.

Now, the higher sense of glory the inspired writers had, the keener was their sense of shame.

And if ever any men had the keenest sense of glory; if ever any men in the world were alive to glory and shame; if ever any men had the strongest dread of shame, and the utmost caution to avoid it before God and all the world—these were the men.

No person ever encouraged and excited an honest ambition to excel in wisdom, fortitude, and a generous zeal, so much as the eternal son of God, seated on his lofty throne in heaven, and addressing himself to all his churches on earth to the end of time. For we are not foolishly to imagine, that Christ's addresses were confined to one little spot, the lesser Asia, or to seven single churches, in one single period of time. To confine ourselves in such narrow limits and views would discover a poverty of understanding, and such meanness of soul, as must be infinitely dishonourable to the vast views of the son of God, and the boundless extent of his conceptions,

Seven times, yea eight times, he speaks to the christian conqueror, Rev. ii. iii. xxi. And eighteen distinct honours he proposes and promises to the brave and nobly-ambitious soldier in his armies.—Here ambition may rise to an unbounded and eternal empire.

Honour

Honour is an inward state of dignity and distinction in the eye, and approbation and empire of God; so as to be beyond the reach of contempt, scorn, disdain, and just suspicion, or calumny of men or devils.

6. PLEASURE, or a SENSE of DELIGHT was another spring of action, on which the spirit of God operated when he stirred up the minds of the sacred penmen to write the holy scriptures.

If we were to examine the minds of the finest pagan geniuses that have ever figured in the learned world, we shall find that the pleasures of imagination, and the vigorous hopes of immortal fame, were the main springs that excited them to compose their sublime poems and monuments of history and masculine eloquence. It would be a pleasing and useful speculation to pursue this thought, and apply it to the productions of Homer and Demosthenes, to Cicero and Virgil.

—It would yield us farther delight and improvement to apply ourselves to trace out the master springs and motives which set to work the pens of Bacon, Boyle and Milton, of Newton, Locke, Pope and Dr. Young, with a thousand other authors of ancient and modern times. This would give us a clear insight into the good and bad springs which actuate the heart of man. We at present forbear, although I had prepared some materials on this enchanting theme; but I must leave

leave it to the contemplation of virtuous and ingenious young persons to pursue it at their leisure, and return to my purpose of tracing out the sacred pleasure which the holy writers felt when they penned the words of God for the salvation of the church.—Here the springs of pleasure were all refined and consecrated to the honour and glory of the admirable perfections of God.

Pleasure, or a sense of delight, must necessarily be in its very nature, an agreeable sensation of the soul ; a lively satisfaction and ease of mind ; an agreeable feeling in the powers and affections of the heart ; a pure consciousness of the presence of beauty, truth, and goodness, as highly suited to our taste ; a sweet gratification of the rational powers ; a joyous recreation of the mind.

Pleasure is the result of perceptive powers, and an object well adapted to those powers. 'Tis the genuine effect of a suitable object, rightly applied to a well-disposed and delicate faculty.—The revelations of God are glorious objects, full of truth and grandeur, goodness, novelty, and beauty, suited to a rectified and holy mind, richly adapted to regale a sound and correct imagination, and to give the utmost pleasure to a lively and holy taste for all that is sublime and beautiful in the councils, operations, and perfections of the most high God. Happiness

Happiness consists in pleasure, and pleasure is the aim of all human actions: 'tis the aim of the severest virtue and holiness.

The excellency of pleasure is to be estimated by the nature and duration of the capacities; to which that pleasure is adapted, and which are fit to enjoy it.

The pleasures of a man are above the pleasures of a beast

The pleasures of an oyster, a bird, a beast, and a man, cannot be in all things the same, either as to kind or degree.

The pleasures of an angel are above those of a man.

The pleasures of the man Christ Jesus are above those of an angel; and the pleasures of the eternal son of God are infinitely above the pleasures of his human nature.

The desire in man after pleasure is unboundedly violent, and eternally inextinguishable: and, without a full gratification of this desire, man must be a most cursed and miserable creature for ever.

A state of ease, in all the powers and affections of a rational and immortal being, must be inevitably a state of pleasure.

As holiness in man is a lively and ardent inclination or disposition to cleave to God, and
produce

produce good to all the objects of rational agency ; so pleasure is a lively sensation of the inward presence of the purest good : and such a sensation the sacred writers felt when they penned their immortal writings, under the impressions of the goodness and beauty of God.

Trace out the pleasures of knowledge, contemplation, reflection, and hope, that Moses, David, Isaiah, Paul, felt in writing their holy books.

The pleasures of a wise and worthy man must consist very much in the perception of the purest and noblest truth : in daily contemplations on objects of the highest grandeur, of the most astonishing novelty, and the most attractive beauty : a perpetual reflexion on these objects will be a perpetual spring of new pleasure ; and a possession of the goodness contained in these objects must vastly increase the pleasure of reflecting upon them, especially if we add the consideration of a vigorous hope of eternally enjoying these pleasures, without the possibility of a disappointment. Now let us apply all this to Moses, David, Isaiah, and Paul.

Let us enter into the bosom of Moses, and consider what infinite delight he must take in all the glorious objects which God opened to his ravished understanding ! O ! Sirs, what a prospect

pect is here ! to be informed of the whole process of creation : to see, with the eyes of his mind, the heavens and earth leaping from nothing into existence : to see the light spring out of God, and expand its rays over the dark chaos : to see the earth and waters divide from each other ! to see the trees, plants, and flowers, sprout up in a moment in thousands of forms : to see the mighty mass of fire, the sun, fixed in the centre, the moon and stars all starting into view, to bespangle the grand dome or arch of heaven ! to see the birds leap into existence, life, and action, and fly in the open expanse : to see, by the light of God's spirit, all the fishes, from the little minnow to the mountainous whale, spring into life and motion, and sport in the almost boundless ocean ! to see the beasts, both wild and tame, in their various forms, rise out of the earth and play in the fields and forests.

What unutterable pleasure must Moses feel on contemplating, in the light of the blessed spirit, the original perfections and beauties of the soul and body of the first man, when he saw him, in the clearest point of view, under the forming hands of God, rising out of the dust, and endued with a living and rational soul from the immortal breath of God.

He saw that this man, just sprung into life from the hands of his maker, had a soul shining

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with

with rays of divine and heavenly light, and adorned with the brightest wisdom and most beautiful knowledge and prudence, whereby he was not only perfectly master of the nature of created things, but was charmed and delighted with the contemplation of uncreated truth: the eyes of his understanding being constantly fixed on the perfections of his God, from the consideration of which perfections he deduced, by the clearest reasoning, what was equitable and just, what worthy of God, and what worthy of himself, as a creature, perceptive of what was fit and beautiful in temper and action.

He had likewise the purest holiness of will, resting in God as the supreme truth; and revering him as the most tremendous majesty; loving him as the chief and only good; and, for the sake of God, holding dear whatever his mind divinely taught, pointed out as grateful to God, resembling his holy nature, and expressive of his perfections: in fine, whatever contributed to the acquiring an intimate union, an immediate connexion with him; delighting in the communion of his God, which was now allowed him, panting after farther converse with him, raising himself to this correspondence with God, by the various creatures, as so many scales or steps: and, finally, setting forth the praises of his most unspotted holiness as the most perfect pattern,

according

according to which he was to frame both himself and his actions to the utmost of his ability and zeal.—This was delighting himself in God. Job xxxiv. 9.

The rectitude and beauty of his soul * was accompanied with a most regular temperature of the whole body; all whose members, as instruments of holiness and justice, presented themselves ready and active at the first impulse and motion of his holy will.

Nor was it becoming God to form a rational immortal creature for any other purpose than his own supreme glory; which glory the rational creature himself, unless wise and holy, could neither perceive, discern, nor celebrate, as shining forth in the other works of God. Destitute of this light, and deprived of this endowment of holiness, what could the creature man prove, but the reproach and disgrace of his creator; a silly foolish child, every way unfit to answer the great end of his creation.

We

* Read that prince of all divines, Dr. Witsius's Oeconomy of the Covenants; in which work you see the finest combination of taste, elegance, learning, and manly devotion, that perhaps ever appeared in any body of divinity in the World. I began the study of it in April, 1746; and do assure my young friends, that it has endeared itself to me more and more to this day: Hervey might well say, "I lament it as one of my greatest losses, that I was acquainted with this excellent author no sooner." I am happy to inform the English Reader, that a new edition of the translation is now to be had at Mr. Dilly's, on very easy Terms. 3 vols. 8vo.

We should now proceed to consider the farther pleasures of Moses,^a in his views of all the grand scenes and facts, which rose up in his mind whilst writing his sacred books.

We should then view the pleasures of the holy psalmist, the prophet Isaiah, and the other prophets; with the sacred evangelists and apostles: but these must be omitted, as a large discourse on this excellent theme would make this part of the work disproportionable to the rest—every intelligent reader will please to enlarge on it in his own meditations.

We now proceed to the most delicate and difficult part of our work, on the nature of Inspiration: I shall have infinite reason to adore God to eternity, if he will please to conduct me with wisdom and success through this branch of my design; so that my dear readers, for whose sake I principally write, shall have a clear and judicious apprehension of the nature of Inspiration. The great difficulty lies in steering our course between the two extremes of a wild enthusiasm, and a cold and barren speculation; but to treat the subject with clear and determinate ideas, and in such just and proper language as shall at once enlighten the understanding and warm the heart.

In the name and fear of God let us proceed.

IV. GOD

IV. GOD infused the THOUGHTS and MATTER
of the SCRIPTURE into the SOULS of the sacred
PENMEN.

Here let us proceed with prudence and caution, and make every step good and firm as we go : and we will, by way of preliminary, introduce the words of a very judicious divine, whose sentiments we adopt as proper to our present purpose. *

1. When we say that the scriptures are the word of God, or that this word is of God, we do not mean that it was ALL spoken with an articulate voice by him, or that it was ALL written immediately by the finger of God. The law of the Ten Commandments were indeed articulately spoken by him, and the writing of them was the writing of God. Exod. xx. 1. God spake all these words, saying, Exod. xxxi. 18. And he gave to Moses—two tables of stone, written with the finger of God. xxxii. 16. And the tables were the work of God : and the writing was the writing of God ; graven upon the tables : in which God set an example to his penmen in after times, to write whatever might be suggested by him to their souls, that it might remain upon record to be read. But it is certain that all the Bible was not spoken or written in the same manner as the law on mount Sinai. It is sufficient that

* Dr. Gill's Body of Divinity, vol. 1. page 42.

that the holy penmen were bid to write what God delivered to them, as Moses and other good men were ordered to do. Deut. xxx. 19. Now, therefore, write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel. Jer. xxx. 1. 2. The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel: "Write thee all the words that I have spoken to thee in a book. Rev. i. 11. 19. What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. And that which was ordered by God to be written, was the same as if it was written by himself; because they spake and wrote as they were moved by the holy spirit." 2 Pet. i. 21.

22. Not all that is contained in the scriptures is of God. Some are the words of others: yea, some are the speeches of Satan, and very bad ones too. But now the penmen of those books, in which those speeches are, were moved and directed by the Lord to commit them to writing: so that though they themselves are not the word of God, yet that they are written, and are on record, is of God; and which was directed to, and done, to shew the malice, pride, blasphemy, and impiety, of that wicked spirit.

There are also speeches of bad men, as of

Cain, Pharaoh, and others, ordered to be written, to discover the more the corruption of human nature; and even of good men, as of Moses, David, Jonah, and particularly the friends of Job; and yet these speeches are on record, by divine order, to prove matters of fact, to shew the weaknesses and frailties of the best of men. Some of the writers of the scriptures, as Moses, and the historical ones, being eye and ear witnesses of many things they wrote, could have wrote them of their own knowledge, and out of their own memories; and others they might take out of diaries, annals, and journals, of their own, and former times; yet, in all they wrote, they were under the impulse and direction of God; what to leave, and what to take and insert into their writings, and transmit to posterity—so that all they wrote may be truly said to be by divine authority.

In the writings and discourses of the apostle Paul are several quotations out of heathen authors, (viz.) Aratus, Menander, and Epimenides, which were produced *ad hominem* for greater conviction; and which he was directed to quote and write in his epistles and discourses for that reason: so that though the words are not of God, yet that they were quoted and written, was of God.

Let us now proceed, with the utmost care and caution, to state and unfold the true nature of
divine

divine inspiration: the matter is infinitely important and useful, and deserves our most intense thoughts, and the severest consideration.—Some writers may have carried the idea of the inspiration of our sacred penmen too high; the doing which is the way to injure the best cause in the world. Other authors, at the same time, have gone much too low, so as to lessen the majesty and grandeur of the sacred scriptures, and diminish that veneration, love, and regard for the holy Bible, which is so absolutely necessary for the maintaining the credit and honour of the word of God, and the support and advancement of true religion in the church of God. But, in whatever divine Inspiration consists, two axioms, or truths, are clear and evident to the understanding of every serious and honest christian.

A X I O M 1.

Something is meant by Inspiration, which is so peculiar to the sacred books, that it cannot be said of any other books or writings in the whole world.

A X I O M 2.

And that this Inspiration, be it what it will, is so common to all the parts of our sacred oracles, that none of them are to be excluded from a share in it, though some of the books may be inspired in a manner and degree higher than others.

These

These two remarks, or principles of clear truth, will give us real assistance in searching out the true general idea of Inspiration.

We must assert and maintain, that all the sacred books were divinely inspired, though in different degrees; I say in different degrees: for we believe there is scarce any man of sense but will agree in this, that there could be no need of the same degree of Inspiration to write the plain facts of history, as will be requisite to make a man a prophet to foretell future events. Our enquiry then is this: What sort of divine Inspiration or influence that must be, that was so peculiar to the penmen of the sacred scriptures, that other writings have no just right or cause to pretend to it, and yet so common to these holy books as that they had it, more or less, in all the parts of that sacred volume which we call the BIBLE?—and we will comprize the answer in a few words.

“ This DIVINE INSPIRATION implies, that they who delivered the SACRED ORACLES of the old and new testament to mankind, were not only excited by the spirit of God to contribute their respective parts for the common good of the church, but they likewise had his special assistance both in the forming their conceptions, and framing their writings: and they had such an assistance of God in their several compositions, as effectually pre-

vented their inserting any thing that was FALSE, or omitting any necessary truth out of ignorance, indolence, forgetfulness, or malevolence: so that their report of facts, and representation of things, may be very safely and confidently depended on by the church and people of God, from age to age, and be most abundantly useful and comfortable to them in their path to immortal glory in the kingdom of heaven."

But it is necessary and extremely useful for us to form our conceptions of this most glorious subject, in the most distinct manner, in the following train of propositions.

PROP. 1. Inspiration was an impresson of the spirit of God on the understanding as well as the imagination of the sacred penmen. A divine influence actuated such persons as were inspired: God took their immortal minds and reason into his own hands: he touched their rational souls, and they acted as under the influence of the divine being.—To make this grand affair easy to the conception of serious christians, let it be observed, "that when we converse with our fellow-creatures by our language and voice, the vibration of the air on their ears produces such a motion in the brain, as conveys our thoughts, images, and ideas to that power of the soul which we call simple intelligence, or the understanding;

standing; and from the understanding to the heart and conscience of man."

Now God, who has a near access to the spirits of all his servants, made such impressions on the imagination and the understanding of those whom he chose to be penmen of the holy scripture, as was sufficient and proper to convey to them the notices of his mind and will, which he intended for the instruction and comfort of the church of God to the end of the world: and he infallibly assisted them to convey those discoveries of his perfections, councils, and operations, so received and revived upon their minds, to other servants and disciples of the most high God.

Should any person curiously or captiously enquire, in what the impressions that were made upon the holy penmen differed, or were distinguished from those inferior impressions which have at all times been made on christians, in all ages, since the age of Inspiration? we cannot see any inconvenience or damage that can arise from our owning it extremely arduous and difficult to assign precisely, and describe accurately, the difference: for we may, upon good evidence, be assured, the difference was very real and great, though we are unable, in a particular manner, to explain it and account for it to a curious and captious enquirer.

PROP. 2. This impressi^{on} of GOD upon the souls of the sacred penmen was such as made it absolutely and undoubtedly CERTAIN, to the persons inspired, that it came most surely and incontestably from GOD: yea, as certainly as it is at any time to us, that we converse with such or such a well-known friend or dear acquaintance, and receive certain notices, impressi^{ons}, informations, images, or instructions, from him. And this must be allowed by all serious, intelligent, and honest men, who have calmly considered the matter.

To make this more easy to the conceptions of my dear young readers, let me desire you to consider, that the greatest speakers and writers in all ages, were always able to distinguish themselves, by their style and manner of speaking, from the vulgar herd of speakers and writers. What think you of Demosthenes and Plato, of Homer, Socrates, and Xenophon, among the Greeks; of Cicero, Virgil, Sallust, and Livy, among the Romans? And what think you of Milton, Mr. Addison, and Dr. Young, amongst the English writers? Or were I to come down a little lower, to Hervey, as a writer; and to a Pitt, and a Barré, as speakers. Could not any of these be distinguished, in their style or manner of expression, and their energy and elegance of thought, from the common class of authors and
9
speakers?

speakers? Could not the glorious Demosthenes be distinguished, in the force and fire of his thoughts and language, from the words or writings of porters and cobblers? You yourselves are not at a loss for a moment what answer to give: you see the difference with an intuitive readiness, and without one single doubt.

But we will return to the sacred Scriptures, and give an instance in the greatest and best man then in the world. I mean the glorious father of all true believers. He had a command from God of the most startling and astonishing kind. Nature must recoil, and the bowels of a father could not but relent and yearn over his dear son. And had there been the least room to doubt whether the impression came from God, his refusal to comply had been right and just in the eyes of men and angels, yea, in the eye of God himself. I say again, God himself must have justified and approved of his refusal. But, behold, he freely complies, and God accepts his ready compliance, as a bright evidence of the truth and the victorious strength of his faith.

This is inconceivable, had he not had full conviction and satisfaction in the manner and circumstances of the impression, that it came from God only: and if he could have such full satisfaction in a matter so delicate and awful, so nice and distressing, so as to act upon it without
dread,

dread, and without the least hesitation or demur; then it may easily be conceived, that the persons whom God chose as the penmen of the holy scripture might, in the same way, have full satisfaction as to the impressions they felt, that they were really divine, or from the spirit of God.

But lest any sceptic or caviller, or honest enquirer after truth, should apprehend, that, in this way, a door is opened to enthusiasm and delusion, so that we shall never know truth from error, or the inspirations of God from the wild freaks of human imagination; we have an admirable answer ready by one of the most masculine writers in the world: I mean the great John Smith, of Cambridge, in his discourse on Prophecy. Thus speaks that eminent man: "That the prophetic spirit, seating itself in the rational powers as well as in the imagination, did never alienate the mind, but inform and enlighten it; and they that were acted by this spirit, always maintained a clearness and consistency of REASON with strength and solidity of JUDGMENT. For God did not make use of idiots or fools to reveal his will by, but such whose intellectual powers were intire, sound, strong, and perfect; and he imprinted such a clear copy of his wisdom, holiness, and truth upon them, as that it became their own sense, being digested fully into their understandings,

understandings, so as they were able to deliver and represent it to other men as truly as any can paint forth his own thoughts."*

But, farther, let us answer the objection by observing, That it is one thing to own such divine impressions, before there was a written rule, and in the case of all those sacred writers who were to bear a part in the compiling of this rule of faith; and a quite different thing to allow of pretensions to like impressions, since the rule has been given, and the whole CANON OF SCRIPTURE fixed and settled.

And, again, 'tis one thing for a servant of God to have such a divine impression merely for his own conduct, and to act according to it; and a quite different thing for a man to pretend, by virtue of an impression he thinks divine, to give rules to others, expecting they should be influenced by them.

In this latter case, some clear and mighty evidence, confirming the divinity of such an impression, has ever and justly been demanded; and God, therefore, did not leave his inspired servants destitute of suitable and glorious MIRACLES, which are the only external and present means to confirm the DIVINITY of those impressions, to which he expected other persons should pay the utmost attention, and the most profound veneration and regard.

PROP. 3.

* See Smith's Select Discourses, page 190—273; 4to. 1660.

PROP. 3. By such sort of impreſſions as thoſe mentioned above, the penmen of the ſacred oracles were ſtirred up to write; for they ſpake as they were moved, *pheromenoi*, borne on by the holy Spirit. 2 Pet. i. 21. That is, ſays Dr. Guiſe, they ſpake and wrote only ſuch things as were ſuggeſted to them by the holy Spirit, whoſe immediate dictate excited them to utter the ideas which he raiſed in their minds, and to expreſs them in words that ſhould convey the true ſenſe of them.*

Our divine oracles conſiſt of divers parts. Some of thoſe parts give light into the doctrines of our holy religion, while others only contain the hiſtory of the church and people of God: ſome contain predictions of future events, while others contain rules and directions for duty and virtuous practice. None of the ſacred writers were left to chuſe their own part, any otherwiſe than under the conduct of the holy Spirit, who was the grand overſeer, or glorious SUPERINTENDENT of the WHOLE.

They ſet themſelves to writing, and to the particular ſubjects on which they treated, and in the method which they ſeverally purſued, juſt as he inclined their hearts, moved on their paſſions, conducted their underſtandings, and actuated all their

* See Dr. John Guiſe's judicious Expoſition of the New Teſtament, Vol. 3. p. 652.

their intellectual or rational powers, and no otherwise.

PROP. 4. They acted under the influence of such impressions of the spirit of God, throughout the whole composure of their several writings, from first to last, till their glorious works were compleatly finished, for the honour of God, and the good of the church, to the end of the world.

The divine Spirit immediately suggested and dictated to them such things as were matters of pure revelation. He likewise illuminated their minds in the several doctrinal and practical truths which they delivered in writing: he refreshed their memories as to the things they knew in a common way: he helped them to bring forth the things that were divinely impressed on their imagination: and so conducted them in all their compositions, that they neither *omitted* any thing which he thought necessary and expedient, nor *inserted* any thing but what would serve his purposes; but *selected* those ideas, images, facts, and discoveries, that he knew would be most profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction, from one age to another, to the end of the world.

PROP. 5. These divine impressions of the spirit of God did not deprive the persons inspired of the use of their reason and understanding, nor destroy the difference of their several natural

faculties and abilities, but were attempered to the different genius and education of the sacred writers. The several penmen of the holy scriptures made use of their rational powers as far as they could be serviceable to their purpose, and the spirit of God supplied their defects: so that the poetical books, and other parts of the Bible, may appear to be the effects of study and meditation, and yet be inspired by God: for Inspiration did not necessarily exclude thought and study in sacred compositions, though it secured from error or all misconceptions and misrepresentations to the people and church of God.

The holy Spirit used the sacred penmen as reasonable creatures, and made use of their judgments, memories, and affections; but they acted under his guidance in the whole of their work.

Their style and language, or the manner in which they expressed their conceptions and passions, naturally differing from each other, the holy Spirit did not hinder or alter this difference in those writings which they drew up under his conduct; but it was of the same strain and manner with what they used commonly in expressing their conceptions, except where God thought fit to interpose in some particular elevations and grandeur of thought, or peculiar strains of majesty and authority.

And though it be allowed and freely owned,
that

that the style of the prophets, and other sacred penmen, was usually the same when they spake, by the order of God, with that which they used in their common discourse; yet still their being inspired, and acting under the divine conduct, in committing their conceptions to writing, is a mighty security and a most delightful satisfaction to our minds; which leads us to the next proposition.

PROP. 6. These divine impressions of the holy Spirit preserved them from error, with which all merely human writings are chargeable. These heavenly influences did so, not only in a way of immediate SUGGESTION, when that was necessary to prevent mistakes and misrepresentations, but also by a superintending direction; when in the writings they drew up, they enlarged or amplified on things and facts which came to their knowledge in an ordinary way, and of which they were eye and ear witnesses.

It has been suggested by an half thinker, who delights in starting difficulties about Inspiration, that a man has no need of Inspiration to relate faithfully what he has seen. It is granted, he has no need of it in writing a common history; but it is otherwise when God intends to make use of a man to draw up a part of the SACRED HISTORY, not only for the use and benefit of his church in all future ages, but with an intention that they should firmly depend upon it.

Then it is not enough that he, who is the historian, be disposed as an honest man, faithfully to relate what he has seen and heard; but it is likewise necessary that he have the help of the holy Spirit to bring things to remembrance, to enable him duly to select out of many things that might be related, such facts and thoughts as are most important and needful, and that would be most useful; and to keep from all mistakes and errors whatsoever, both in matter, method, and expression.

The divine Spirit, therefore, so directed our sacred penmen, as not to suffer them to miscarry, or let any dashes of their pen vary from truth, as Faustus Socinus would perversely insinuate; and as Episcopi^{us}, with the same corrupt temper, has asserted. Of this most infallible direction of God, we have so clear and good evidence, upon the whole, that we may boldly say, if any particular instances can be produced, that are not to be reconciled with this proposition, it were but a requisite piece of modesty for us rather to suspect the failure may have been in copyers and transcribers than in the compilers and original writers. *

Upon

* Let any man say the sacred writers were capable of mistaking, or did mistake in smaller matters; and they can find out no way for a sufficient security that they might not mistake in greater matters likewise, and in things of the last moment to our souls. Thus you see Infidels, and their patrons, the sceptical professors of the christian religion, attempt to undermine the main support of our faith, and reduce us to the most desperate state of uncertainty: but blessed be God, we defy their attempts; we fear them not.

Upon the whole, when the great and good apostle Paul asserts, that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, his meaning is this : that it was drawn up by persons, chosen of God, and appointed to that wonderful and most important work ; who, though they used their own natural, rational powers in their several writings, were yet under the influence of such divine impressions, as kept them from all possibility of mistake, or error, and misrepresentation : they were undoubtedly under such an infallible conduct of the holy Spirit, as their reports may be safely and confidently depended on by the church and people of God in all ages, to the end of the world.

RECAPITULATION.

Let us now stand still for a few minutes, and review the ground we have trod, and the steps we have endeavoured to make good.—We have considered, that it is a possible thing with God to communicate ideas to the human mind—that he can make himself known to be God alone that speaks, so as to distinguish himself from all other speakers—that God worked on all the best springs of action in the sacred writers, and addressed himself to their fears, hope, gratitude, ambition, glory, shame, and pleasure ; and thus stirred up their minds to write—that he infused the ideas and matter of the scriptures into the
minds

minds of the penmen, preserved them free from **all** mistakes in the histories, the sacred poems, the prophecies, the doctrines, laws, and promises.—And now I do, with real gratitude to **God** rising from the depths of my soul, adore his goodness, mercy, and faithfulness, for conducting me thus far through my work. Blessed, for ever blessed be my divine master, that the **MAIN DIFFICULTY** in this most delicate and important subject is over; and I trust that every sensible and honest reader will acknowledge, that a rational and satisfying account is given of the true nature of Inspiration.

But there is likewise one great and good man to whom, under God, I am more indebted than to all the authors in the world besides. I owe a debt of justice and gratitude to Grotius, for his celebrated book, *de Veritate*, 12mo.—to Dr. Stillingfleet, for his *Origines Sacræ*, 4to.—to Dr. Owen, for his *Treatise on the Divine Original*, and *self-evidencing Light of the Scriptures*, 12mo. 1658; and his *Reason of Faith*, 8vo.—to the great Halyburton, for his *Dissertation on the Reason of Faith*, 4to. at the end of his book against the Deists—to the amiable and excellent Mr. Benjamin Bennett, for his admirable *Sermons on Inspiration*, 8vo: 1730; with many other worthy divines on this subject. But I owe more to one man than to them all; I found in him
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what I sought for every where else in vain : and I bless God to eternity, that my wants are most happily supplied by a man of a clear, rational head, of a warm, honest, sound heart, trained up in good learning and religion from his youth ; his judgment and taste matured by age and regular studies of the best kind for noble services in the church of God. In this author I found clear, cool, manly reasoning, without the wildness of enthusiasm, or the least scepticism of infidels : in a word, this worthy man appeared to me to have wrote with design to aid my thoughts in my greatest difficulty ; and I speak with more freedom and copiousness on purpose to recommend him to the best and dearest affections of young students of divinity, who feel their hearts warmed with a generous ambition to be of real use and consequence in the church of God. *

* The incomparable work on this subject is intituled, *The Inspiration of the Holy Writings of the Old and New Testament, considered and improved in fourteen sermons, preached at the merchants' lecture at Salter's-Hall, by Edmund Calamy, D. D.*

N. B. These sermons were preached at the Tuesday's lecture, beginning August 22, 1704, and finished March 19, 1706. With grief and indignation I declare, that none of all my friends ever spoke one word concerning this work for above thirty years ; nor did it come into my hands till Saturday, Sept. 21, 1771 : then I found what I had been anxiously seeking for ; but in vain every where else. I laid it down for a rule, from which I would never depart, that I would take nothing upon trust, except my own existence ; and that I would submit to nothing but what convinced my understanding by rational evidence. Such evidence I have sought with all the ardour and sweat of my soul ; and such evidence I have found to my eternal satisfaction and delight. And this is the evidence, my dear reader, which I have proposed to you : and this kind of evidence I will propose to your reason, and your heart, in all the subsequent Contemplations.

Select BOOKS on the Subject of this CONTEMPLATION.

A view of the judicious Method in which Dr. Calamy proceeds to state and defend the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

In Sermon I. he considers the grand advantage of God's ancient People, who were peculiarly favoured above all the World, and chiefly in having the Oracles of God committed to them.

Serm. II. explains the *Nature of Inspiration*, and produces four Arguments to prove that the Old and New Testament were really given by Inspiration of God.

Serm. III. treats of the Writings of the New Testament, and gives five Arguments to prove their divine Inspiration.

Serm. IV. contains two further Arguments in Proof of the Divine Inspiration of the Old Testament.

Serm. V. considers the ancient *Prophetical* Inspiration, with the *Apostolic* Inspiration. Here we ought to read the great John Smith on Prophecy, and Dr. Witfius on Prophetic Inspiration.

Serm. VI. answers the Objection to the Inspiration of the Scriptures, drawn from the apprehended *Contradictions* contained in them.

Serm. VII. answers the Objection drawn from the *Aburdities* and *Impossibilities* they are supposed to contain.

Serm. VIII. answers the Objection drawn from the apprehended *Meanness*, *Obscurity*, and *Flatness* of the *Style*; and the Want of *Method* in the Writings of the Bible.

Serm. IX. answers the Objection taken from some Particulars of the *Matter* of Scripture.

Serm. X. answers the common Objection, that a much better Method might have been taken for Instruction in Religion than the dull and heavy Way of a written Volume.

Serm. XI. From the Inspiration of the Bible infers the unutterable *Usefulness* of the Scripture.

Serm. XII. shews the *Errors* of the *Romish* Religion both in its Foundation and Superstructure.

Serm. XIII. draws other useful Inferences from the same Principle.

Serm. XIV. Excellent Directions for the profitable Reading the Holy Scriptures.—I must declare once more, that this Book is the first in Dignity and Excellence on the Subject I ever read. To this I would add Dr. Doddridge's three Sermons on the Evidences of Christianity, with his Dissertation on Inspiration, in the Family Expositor, Vol. 3. Dr. David Jennings, on the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, founded on Common Sense.

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A CONTEMPLATION
ON THE
DEMONSTRATIVE EVIDENCE
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The NATURE of DEMONSTRATION, EVIDENCE, and CONVICTION, clearly explained.—The WISDOM of GOD in framing our FACULTIES in such a MANNER, as to require us to use our REASON in enquiring into the EVIDENCES of CHRISTIANITY.—PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS before we enter on the DEMONSTRATION of INSPIRATION.—'Tis a matter of infinite CONSEQUENCE.—The DIVINITY of the SCRIPTURES is not to be taken as a FIRST PRINCIPLE without RATIONAL PROOF.—Every BOOK that pretends to be INSPIRED is not presently to be admitted as such.—We are not to resolve our CONVICTION of a former INSPIRATION into a fresh INSPIRATION.—We ought to be satisfied with such MORAL EVIDENCE as the nature of the subject will bear, and not require

require GEOMETRICAL DEMONSTRATION.—The BIBLE contains nothing unworthy of the CHARACTER of GOD.—It bears striking MARKS of his MORAL PERFECTIONS.—A concise view of the SOURCES of DEMONSTRATION, viz, the GOODNESS of the DOCTRINE, MIRACLES, PROPHECY, the CHARACTER of the PENMEN.—The first of these proposed more at large.

THE idea of the book we style the Scripture, and the idea of the nature of Inspiration, do not instantly appear connected so clearly as the idea of existence, and the idea of our own existence; for these two appear in a moment to be so agreeing and connected, that we cannot make them plainer by any third idea whatsoever.

But the divine INSPIRATION of the scriptures will admit of proof, by making use of other ideas, or evidences, whose agreement with the idea of Inspiration is in a moment discerned by the human understanding.

DEMONSTRATION is a clear agreement of ideas founded on some self-evident truths, and proceeding, by easy deductions, to a conviction, which satisfies the mind, and silences all cavils and objections.

CONVICTION consists in feeling the force of truth in the understanding.

EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE is the clear appearance of truth to the soul, producing an assent to it as truth.

The divine Inspiration of the Scriptures demands proof by the reason that God has given us; and this glorious subject deserves, as well as demands, the utmost force and rigour of demonstration: and God has so formed our minds, as to stir us up to diligence and labour, and to prevent and cut off all laziness and presumption in religion.

This is a striking instance of the wisdom of God in framing our souls in such a manner, as that we are obliged to use our reason to discern the being of the God that made us, and to discern the Inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, which God has given us for our guide to wisdom, duty, and eternal happiness.

We cannot attain to mere intuition of the Inspiration of the Scriptures, but we are obliged to make use of our understanding and reason to discern their divine original, usefulness and excellence.

The most simple and easy method of demonstrating the divine Inspiration of the Bible, is by making use of ideas, drawn from the goodness of the doctrine, and the tendency of its laws and promises, to make us happy—the sensible actions of God, which have produced a change
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in the order and laws of nature—the prediction of future events, which have come to pass in a most exact manner in the several parts of the natural and moral world—with the moral character of the penmen, who appear evidently to be connected with God, and to bear the impressions of his holiness in their hearts and lives.

And the agreement of the above ideas with the idea of writings inspired by God, will be unavoidably seen by the understanding of every honest man in the whole process of the demonstration.

Thus, the ideas we have of real miracles, of clear prophecies, of the goodness and purity of the doctrines, laws, and promises, and the holiness of the penmen, instantly agree with our idea of Inspiration; and it is impossible for the understanding to act as an understanding, that is, as a rational agent, without perceiving instantaneously the agreement of the Scriptures with the idea of an Inspiration from God.

We shall attempt to set before you the most striking evidences and demonstrations of this grand PRINCIPLE; on which the whole of REVEALED RELIGION is built; that the Scriptures of the old and new testament were really inspired by God.

But before we enter upon the copious and abundant demonstration of this truth, we must desire

desire every reader seriously to ponder, and attentively review the following considerations.

CONSIDERATION I.

This is a matter of the last importance, and of infinite consequence to the souls of men. If we are uncertain here, the whole structure of our religion totters to the very basis, and threatens an opprobrious ruin, which will bury us in eternal destruction.

If we be in doubt, as to the truth and divinity of the Scriptures, we shall be able to find no safe foundation, on which to fix our faith and hope. We have infinite need of being well established here—if we fail in this point, we fail in every thing—we shall be poor, wavering, unsettled creatures all our days—we shall be always children in understanding and judgment—always wavering and doubting—tossed to and fro with every wind of scepticism and infidelity—fluctuating in our tempers, and foolish in our conduct—unprofitable in our lives, and worthless in our conversation ;—we shall live without honour, and die in darkness and despair.

Our having been trained up in a general notion of the truth and divinity of the Scriptures, by our parents, will be but a poor security in a shock of temptation, and amidst the scorn of infidels and rakes.—If you know no better argument for the

Inspiration

Inspiration of the Scriptures, than that our parents and nurses told us so, what are we better than Papists, Jews, or Mahommedans?

On the same terms, we might have had as great a veneration for the foolish Talmud, if we had been born among the Jews; or the Alcoran, if we had been born of Mahommedan parents: and on the same principles, we should have been poor blind Papists, if we had been born in Spain or Portugal, Italy or France.

If the report and assertions of those, among whom we have had our education, be the only ground of our satisfaction, it will be in the power of any sceptic, or artful infidel, to unhinge and demolish our foolish faith: It is certain, we every day run the hazard of being staggered, confounded, and overthrown; and indeed, considering the horrid neglect of parents, and tutors of youth, all through this nation, it is no wonder that Popish priests make such ravages on the British youth; yea, upon tens of thousands of poor unprincipled ignorant wretches, in the farther advance of life.

Suppose any of you, my readers, who have, for a long time, apprehended yourselves satisfied upon this head, without searching into the solid grounds and reasons of faith, should still take it for granted that the bible is divinely inspired: how do you know how far you may be shaken, unsettled,

unsettled, and put to confusion and shame? and what the consequence may be, should artful men, and artful devils, vigorously assault your souls; which you ought to expect in the course of your life, in an age that is poisoned with infidelity? What would you do if you had no solid evidence of your religion? How foolish would you look if you had nothing more to say but this, I believe the bible is the word of God, because my mother told me so when I was a boy.

Well then, my readers, if you would not be in danger of bringing a scandal upon your profession, and of turning vile and ugly apostates from Christ, in an hour of temptation, you should see to it with the utmost ardour and attention, that you be rationally and powerfully confirmed in this principle, upon solid grounds, that will bear the shocks of the fiercest Opposition.*

CONSIDERATION II.

The divinity of the Scriptures is not to be taken as a first principle, without rational proof. 'Tis unreasonable and mean to beg the question; that is, to take it for granted, as a first principle in divinity. We do not desire this at the hands of infidels,

* I cannot forbear declaring, with a degree of warmth, that borders upon bitterness, grief, and indignation, after the experience of twenty-nine years, in the province of educating youth, that, out of above five hundred young persons of all ages, from seven to twenty, who have come under my care, I have never had one youth, who had been instructed, by his parents or former tutors, in the solid evidences of the christian religion. —If my observation is a specimen of the state of the British youth in general, no wonder that the nation is going back to Popery and Atheism.

infidels, or doubters, or honest enquirers after truth; but are willing it should be examined with all the severity of sound reason. Christianity is founded upon argument, and upon argument we rest it for ever: it dreads no examination; it loves to be searched into, even to the very bottom. The damning folly and baseness of the present generation is, that they will not be honest in sifting the evidences of revelation: this is an age of luxury, levity, laziness, inconsideration, and frivolism; the people of higher and lower ranks render themselves contemptible, by refusing to use that little portion of common sense, which God has given them; and, without a very great alteration in their thoughts and pursuits, they will be contemptible, and ruined to eternity: our sacred volume invites and commands us to shew ourselves men; that is, to act with reason and understanding in all things.

When, indeed, we debate concerning things built on the Scriptures, it is rationally supposed their Inspiration is acknowledged, or owned; that being reckoned the common sense of the christian world.—But, when the QUESTION is, how we know that the Scriptures were given by inspiration of God? to say it is a PRINCIPLE, and must therefore be allowed or taken for granted, will neither satisfy a disturbed and doubtful mind, convince an infidel, nor repel an opposer; who may raise objections,

objections, in order to tempt us to reject the bible altogether.

CONSIDERATION III.

Every book that pretends to be inspired, is not presently to be admitted as such. The Mahomedans have as great a veneration for their Alcoran, as most Christians have for our Bible; and this ought to make us blush with shame; that book of theirs offers itself to them as divinely inspired, as this Bible does to us; if, therefore, a book is to be received presently as divinely inspired, upon it's own report, the Alcoran is to be embraced as well as our Bible; and so we shall be forced to swallow the vilest nonsense, and the most absurd contradictions, that ever were conceived by the heart of man.

But sincere enquirers after truth scorn such meanness of soul; honest free-thinkers disdain to swallow nonsense and absurdity; our only way is, to search and try, that we may not be imposed on, and take a book for divinely inspired that is not so, but is the product of rascally imposture, or wild enthusiasm; and we must have some sure and INFALLIBLE MARKS to try by, or we shall not, when we have used the utmost labour, be satisfied and assured that we are not imposed on.

Among the Jews, a prophet that pretended to come as an express from the invisible world, was

not to be admitted and owned merely on his own report and attestation; and if he proved an impostor, he was to be punished with death. Deut. xiii. 1, 5. They were to judge of him by certain rules; because, there would be false prophets as well as true; therefore, circumstances were to be considered and compared, in passing a judgment, or final decision: and there is equal reason for the same procedure in the case of inspired writings; seeing, some may be offered too, as drawn up by divine Inspiration, when they are not, as well as some that are. Every pretence of this nature is not to be owned and justified; we must search and examine, in order to satisfaction; and the CANONS, or rules, by which we try and judge, ought to be selected with the utmost accuracy, and the severest labour. *

CONSIDERATION IV.

We are not to resolve our conviction of a former Inspiration, into a fresh divine Inspiration; for this is wild enthusiasm, 'tis absurd, or contrary to sound reason, and infinitely dangerous to the souls of men. There is an expression in an excellent divine of our own nation, (whose memory deserves respect) which we ought to look upon as enthusiastic and dangerous; 'tis an error of great consequence, and ought to be avoided by us with the utmost care—the error is in these words.

“ This

* See Dr. Calamy, sermon ii, page 31, 41.

“ This first principle of our faith, that the Scriptures are the word of God, is rooted in us by the immediate Inspiration of the Holy Ghost.” * And he represents, that, the only way of our being satisfied upon this head, is for us to have this persuasion wrought in us, by the spirit of God, though we know not why, or upon what grounds ; but if a man sticks by this notion, he will be involved in endless perplexity and confusion ; in short, this absurd and whimsical notion will draw after it a thousand bad consequences.

Suppose we enquire of a man how he knows that the Scriptures are given by the Inspiration of God ? and he answers “ that he is assured of it, by the Inspiration of the same spirit, by which the Scriptures were indited ;” ’tis natural to question farther, what evidence have you that this Inspiration you pretend to is real, and not imaginary, that it is from the spirit of God, and not from a spirit of delusion ? his only answer must be this, “ I am satisfied of it, in the same way as the sacred penmen were satisfied at first, as to their Inspiration.” And if we admit this answer, as proper and just, a wide door is opened to all manner of error, enthusiasm, and absurdity ; and there is no remedy left to set us right, and secure us from the most ruinous delusions.

It is, indeed, not *only* freely granted, but it admits of abundant evidence, that no man will
receive

* *Copel*, who has written on Temptations.

receive the Scriptures as divinely inspired, with a VITAL FAITH, and so as to be transformed into the christian temper, the divine resemblance, and effectually trained up for heaven, unless the spirit of God enlighten his mind, and impress his heart.

And this is what the greatest of our reformed divines have always meant by the TESTIMONY of the SPIRIT, which the most judicious and learned of them have represented as so necessary, to a full conviction of the divinity of the Scriptures. As the great apostle affirms, “ that no man can say that Jesus is LORD, but by the Holy Ghost,” so may we likewise assert, that no man can say that the Scripture is given by the Inspiration of God, but by the Holy Spirit; that is, he cannot so believe it, with a faith that shall be effectual to salvation, without his gracious and powerful influence; and yet, we cannot conceive how any immediate revelation of the spirit should be necessary to a rational conviction in this case; or how we can suppose the divine spirit should, by a private suggestion, whisper it in the ear of every man that is satisfied on this head, that this book, we call the Bible, is of divine Inspiration.

The real office and agency of the divine spirit, in this respect, is, to operate on the understanding, in a way of rational illumination; assisting the judgment to lay aside prejudices, purifying the affections

affections from corrupt emotions, and giving an ardent love of truth, an honest impartiality of soul, a keenness of attention, and a spiritual TASTE, that we may duly regard those evidences and MOTIVES, which may, and ought to induce a firm persuasion in us, that the sacred Scriptures originated from GOD.

This kind of assistance from the Holy Spirit, is absolutely necessary, earnestly to be implored, and most carefully and gratefully improved; but this kind of aid is clearly as different from a fresh Inspiration, as a rational conviction is from a strong and enthusiastic impression.

It cannot, indeed, be denied, but that there may have been some serious and sincere Christians in all ages, who have so firmly believed the Inspiration of our sacred writings, that they could have confirmed their faith by the most dreadful sufferings, and sealed it with their blood, though they could not have disputed much for it, or given any distinct account of the rational grounds * of it.

But, it by no means follows from thence, that RATIONAL EVIDENCE is not needful, or useful, or is not commonly used by the spirit of God, in producing a saving persuasion, and in preserving from temptations to doubting, fluctuations of assent, and infidelity.

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* The Inward Witness to Christianity, three sermons, by Dr. Watts, are extremely useful to be read here.

CONSIDERATION V.

We ought to be satisfied with such MORAL EVIDENCE * as the nature of the subject will bear, and not require GEOMETRICAL DEMONSTRATION. To demand and insist on more than sound moral evidence, is highly dishonest, captious, and absurd.

When the thing asserted is, that the penmen of Scripture were divinely inspired, to expect and demand GEOMETRICAL demonstrations to prove it, is, to declare we are resolved not to be convinced of it; for, it is to demand more than the matter could bear, supposing it eternally and undoubtedly true. That man, who, in this case, will not be satisfied with such considerations as are sufficient to out-balance any thing that can be affirmed to the contrary, does not use the understanding and reason of a man.

CONSIDERATION VI.

There is nothing in the Scriptures unworthy of God to reveal or record—nothing unworthy of the nature and dignity of God's moral character—nothing contrary to the shining purity of the perfections and reason of a God—nothing reproachful to the most consummate knowledge, wisdom, and prudence—nothing contrary to his most

* On *Moral Evidence*, no man in the world ever wrote better than the great and masculine Humphry Ditton, in his noble treatise on the resurrection of Christ, 8vo. 1712.—I defy all the Deists in the world to confute this treatise. I rejoice to find we shall have some memoirs of his life and experience soon published to the world.

most amiable goodness, grace, and mercy—nothing repugnant or inconsistent with his most intense aversion to all moral impurity—nothing contrary to his natural and immutable justice—nothing that can truly fling a reproach on his essential integrity, and sincerity of heart—or be a stain to the inviolable veracity of his mouth, or impeach the faithfulness of his conduct and actions, in the moral world.—In fine, we have nothing in this sacred book, that can blemish the one grand, uniform, moral character of God; a character without the least duplicity or variation, and eternal as his existence.

CONSIDERATION VII.

The glorious discoveries of Scripture are all holy; all the representations or ideas of facts and objects in heaven, earth, and hell, are quite consistent with the splendor and purity of God's nature and character.

The Bible discovers, with all the brightness of light and fire, the purity and rectitude of the nature of God; it displays, in the most striking manner, his invariable abhorrence of all moral disorder in his creatures, and his infinite complacency in himself, as the standard of beauty and loveliness, with his intense delight in the righteousness and goodness of his own nature, powers, councils, and operations; and it likewise declares God's complacency, in every creature in

No. VI.

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heaven

heaven and earth, that in the least degree, resembles himself, or reflects an image of his own lovely perfections.

I now address myself to the most glorious and delightful work of proving that the holy Scriptures of the old and new Testament were given by INSPIRATION of GOD, as the rule of faith, worship, and morality, to the church of Christ on earth.

The four principal sources of evidence, or demonstration and conviction, are these, (viz.) the goodness of the doctrines, laws, and promises—the working of miracles—the fulfilment of prophecies—the moral character of the penmen; and especially the moral character of the great founder of christianity.

The GOODNESS of the DOCTRINE consists in the fitness of the truths and blessings revealed, to remove from us all kinds of misery, and to promote, in the best manner, our present and eternal happiness.

A MIRACLE is an ACTION of GOD, producing a SENSIBLE CHANGE in the ORDER of NATURE, done to convince his rational creatures, to silence his enemies, to confirm the mission of his prophets and apostles, and to stamp an eternal honour on his divine revelation and religion.

PROPHECY consists in the foretelling of future events in the natural and moral world; declaring,
with

with great truth and precision, what facts should take place, what characters should arise, and what actions of great consequence should be performed. The objects of prophecy have respected the four great empires of the world—the people of the Jews, with their city and temple—other nations around them—the person and sufferings of the Messiah, with the extent and glory of his kingdom in the world—the rise and ruin of popery—and lastly, the internal characters of all mankind in every period of time, with the glory and terror of the resurrection, and the final issue of all the councils and purposes of God.

The MORAL CHARACTER of the penmen consists in those distinguishing qualities, or virtues and graces of their minds, and the peculiar tenor of their conduct, which evidently shew their connexion with God and commission from him as his servants. This appears with the brightest light in the human and divine perfections of the son of God.

I. We now return to the most pleasing views of the GOODNESS of the DOCTRINE, LAWS, and BLESSINGS of Scripture, to promote effectually the salvation and happiness of mankind.

I will introduce my subject with the thoughts of the excellent and amiable Mr. Matth. Henry, who speaks thus: “The Scripture proves its divine authority and original both to the wise

and to the unwise. Even to the unwise, and least thinking part of mankind, it is abundantly proved by the many uncontestable MIRACLES wrought by Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, for the confirmation of its truths and laws. It would be an intolerable reproach to ETERNAL TRUTH to suppose this divine seal affixed to a lie.

“ Besides this, to the more wise and thinking, to the more considerate and contemplative, it recommends itself by those INNATE EXCELLENCIES which are SELF-EVIDENT CHARACTERISTICS of its DIVINE ORIGINAL. If we look with attention, we shall soon be aware of God’s image and superscription upon it. A mind rightly disposed, by an humble sincere subjection to its maker, will easily discover the image of God’s wisdom in the awful depth of its mysteries—the image of his sovereignty in the commanding majesty of its style—the image of his unity in the wonderful harmony and symmetry of all its parts—the image of his holiness in the unspotted purity of its precepts—and the image of his GOODNESS in the manifest tendency of the whole to the welfare and happiness of mankind in both worlds : in short, it is a work that fathers itself.* And as atheists, so deists, notwithstanding their vain-glorious pretensions to REASON, as if wisdom must die with them, run themselves upon the grossest and

* Preface to Exposition, vol. 1.

and most dishonourable ABSURDITIES imaginable : for if the Scriptures be not the word of God, then there is no divine revelation now in the world, no discovery at all of God's mind concerning our duty and happiness : so that if any man in the world was ever so desirous and solicitous to do his maker's will, he must, without remedy, perish in the ignorance of it, since there is no book but this that will undertake to tell him what it is ; a consequence which can by no means be reconciled to the idea we have of the DIVINE GOODNESS. And (which is no less an absurdity) if the Scriptures be not really a divine revelation, they are certainly as great a cheat as ever was put upon the world. But we have no reason to think them so ; for *bad* men would never write so *good* a book, nor would Satan have so little subtilty as to help to cast out Satan ; and good men would never do so ill a thing as to counterfeit the broad seal of heaven, and to affix it to a patent of their own framing, though in itself never so just : no, these are not the words of him that hath a devil." Thus far Mr. Henry.

In order to discern the transcendent goodness and beauty of the holy Scriptures, let us proceed, by regular steps, to consider what are the principal wants and wishes of a rational and immortal soul, who knows its true state in the present life, and its greatest interests with regard to

a vast eternity just before us, and to which we are hastening as fast as the rapid flight of time can carry us. Now, certainly, it must be my first enquiry, "Where is God my maker? and how shall I know him so as to love him, resemble him, and enjoy his favour for ever?"—We have already proved the utter insufficiency of reason to lead us to the true knowledge of God. Contemplation III.—Now nothing is of so great and dear importance to me as to keep continually in my soul a clear, distinct, and strong idea of the amiable and venerable character of God. No religion can rise in a soul without this: no true religion can make any progress in a soul without this: 'tis essential to all religion and happiness to keep up a lovely and lively idea of God, as the first fair, the first wonderful, the first amiable, the first adorable and the last end of my existence.

Knowledge is the conception of ideas, and comparing them to see their agreement or difference. The first of all kinds of knowledge I want is the conception of right ideas of God and my own soul, in order that I may discern my duty to him, and happiness in him.

We want, therefore, above all things, such discoveries of God as are plain and easy to the capacities of my soul, and to the capacities of all mankind. The certainty of God's perfections and the uses of them, must be made clear and pleasing to the human mind. We

We need a particular and special knowledge of God, such as will produce and cherish a peculiar love and veneration for him; general notions, however extensive, are not sufficient. To conceive, on the whole, that God is the BEST and the GREATEST, is not enough for our special purposes and vast affairs with God. We must, in every sort of actions, have a peculiar eye to God, as ever present, ever attentive to our souls : yea, in each particular action, we need such knowledge of God as may influence, guide, and animate us to that regard which is due to him in that kind of actions, or that particular action we are performing before him.

We want a large and comprehensive knowledge of God, in order to answer the grand ends of religion, wisdom, and happiness. Religion is not confined to one particular sort of actions, but must run through all our temper at all times, and through all our conduct in all places : and, therefore, there must be a knowledge not merely of one or two perfections of the divine nature, but we must have a real sense and conception of all the natural attributes, and the glorious and beautiful properties which constitute God's lovely MORAL CHARACTER.

'Tis true, indeed, God cannot be comprehended in all or in any of his perfections : but we must have a just sense and a clear idea of those attributes

attributes and rights of God, which require our regard in our particular actions, so far as these glorious properties are the ground of our veneration and devout affection. As for instance ; to engage me to trust or confide in God, I must know something of his omnipresence and his almighty power, his special care of me, and his minute attention to all my affairs and wants, with his faithfulness to all his promises. To excite me at any time to pray to God, I must be persuaded of his vast knowledge, his perfect wisdom, and his abundant willingness to hear my prayers and attend to the ardent emotions of my heart : I must know his unwearied power and active affection to assist me in the petitions I offer to him. To allure and persuade me to love God, I must know the beauty of his character, as the most excellent being ; his fitness to do me good, as a bountiful rewarder of them that diligently seek him ; his fitness and worthiness to receive all good, as he is the best of beings ; and I must feel his intimate and kind relations to my soul. To engage me to yield a cordial obedience to him, I must know his authority over me, feel my dependence upon his will and absolute dominion ; and that he, as the ever-present God, determines my existence, powers, actions, and happiness, from moment to moment. I must see the nature and reasonableness of the laws

laws he has stamped with his majesty, and inscribed with his adorable dignity: and that he has fixed a law to all the inmost powers of my nature; a law to all the particular actions of my life. Thus 'tis clear as the light of the meridian sun, that different actions require different views of God, in order to their just and beautiful regulation: and as all a man's actions are under the rule of God, so there must be a large and comprehensive knowledge of God to guide, regulate, and urge him forward in the whole course of action, to the glory of God, and his own final happiness. *

We need *durable* conceptions of God, or *abiding* knowledge on the soul. Our minds are exceedingly weak to receive just and amiable ideas of God, weak to discern his transcendent beauty, and weak to retain the pleasing notices of a God: we have need, therefore, of perpetual impressions, and new representations of God every hour. No man can gain these new impressions but from the word and spirit of God.

We are under an indispensable necessity to have renewed impressions of the spirituality, simplicity and immutability of the divine nature. That he is infinite in essence, called omnipresence; infinite in duration, called eternity; as an active, and operative spirit, in a state of active existence, stiled the life of God and omnipotence. We

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have

* Halyburton against Deists, p. 48—50.

have need of an incessant idea of God, as a rational and understanding spirit; a being of omniscience and wisdom, exercising freedom and independency in all his actions, stiled sovereignty and dominion.

We are under an indispensible necessity to have a deep and durable impression of the grandeur and beauty of the affections of God, as a spirit of love, grace, mercy, hatred, anger, wrath, and forbearance.

And a deep and durable sense of the lovely qualities and glorious virtues of God, which render him most beautiful and attractive to the souls of serious christians, is absolutely needful to keep the will in a state of attachment to him. Such are his goodness, holiness, justice, truth, sincerity, and faithfulness; and the completion of his whole character as an all-sufficient God, full of glory, blessedness, and joy, with the delight of God in his own wonderful manner of subsistence.

These are the grand things of God which we need to have immediately present every moment with our minds: and thanks be to God, that a rich and an abundant provision is made in the glorious gospel for this precious, this excellent, this divine and delicate sense of things.

O! thou most wise, wonderful, and adorable LORD GOD, what do we owe thee for the discoveries

coveries of thy gospel ! We will here give what
I would stile

The sublime and beautiful CHARACTER of GOD.

GOD is a spirit. John iv. 24. Thou art the
same. Ps. 102. I change not. Malachi iii. 6.
In him is no variableness or shadow of turning.
James i. 17. He is of one mind, and who can
turn him. Job xxiii. 13. He is not far from
every one of us : in him we live, move, and have
our being. Acts xvii. Whither shall I go from
thy presence ? Ps. 139. Can any hide himself in
secret places that I shall not see him, do not I
fill heaven and earth, saith the LORD ? Jer. xxiii.
24. The everlasting GOD. Gen. xxi. The king
eternal, immortal. 1 Tim. i. 17. From ever-
lasting to everlasting, thou art GOD. Ps. xc.
The living GOD, and stedfast for ever. Dan. vi.
26. The life of GOD. Eph. iv. The living
GOD. Deut. v. 26. I praised and honoured him
that liveth for ever. Dan. iv. 34. With thee is
the fountain of life. Ps. xxxvi. 9. The almighty
GOD. Gen. xvii. 1. He is stiled the ALMIGHTY
thirty times in the book of Job only ; and
seventy times in the whole Bible. Great is our
LORD, and of great power : his understanding is
infinite. Ps. cxlvii. 5. All things are naked and
open to the eyes of him with whom we have to
do. Heb. iv. Thou, GOD, seest me. Gen. xvi.
13. Known unto GOD are all his works, from
G g 2 eternity.

eternity. Acts xv. 18. (The original) I, the LORD, search the heart; I try the reins. Jer. xvii. 10. The only wise God. Rom. xvi. 27. He charged his angels with folly. Job. iv. 18. O! the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Rom. xi. 33. The most high God, possessor of heaven and earth. Gen. xiv. 19. He doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou? Dan. iv. 35. He giveth not account of any of his matters. Job xxxiii. 13. He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. Eph. i. 11. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 1. John i. 5. God is love. 1. John iv. 8. The exceeding riches of his grace. Eph. ii. 7. God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us. Eph. ii. 4. The LORD God, gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness and truth. Exod. xxxiv. 6. 7. The riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering: the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. Rom. ii. 4. God is angry with the wicked every day. Ps. vii. 11. The heat of his great anger. Deut. xxix. 24. The indignation of his anger. Isai. xxx. 30. The fury of his anger. Isai. xlii. 25. The fierceness of mine anger. Hos. xi. 9. God is willing to shew his wrath. Rom. ix. 22. God is jealous,
and

and the LORD revengeth : the LORD revengeth—
 he will take vengeance on his adversaries, and
 reserveth wrath for his enemies. Nahum i. 2—8.
 This is one of the most sublime and awful pas-
 sages in the book of GOD ! Thou hatest all
 workers of iniquity. Ps. v. 5. Let none imagine
 evil—love no false oath : for all these are things
 that I hate, saith the LORD. Zech. viii. 17.
 O ! do not this abominable thing that I hate.
 Jer. xlv. 4. Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of
 hosts ; the whole earth is full of his glory.
 Isa. vi. 3. Glorious in holiness. Exod. xv.
 The BEAUTY of holiness. 2 Chron. xx. 21. He
 is stiled the HOLY ONE of Israel twenty-two times
 in Isaiah only. Holy, holy, holy LORD GOD
 Almighty. Rev. iv. O ! LORD my GOD, mine
 holy one—thou art of purer eyes than to behold
 evil : and canst not look on iniquity. Habak. i.
 12, 13. None holy as the LORD. 1 Sam. ii. 2.
 I will be jealous for my holy name. Ezek. xxxix.
 25. N. B. Jealousy denotes resentment for the
 dearest thing : and it is altogether impossible,
 that GOD should not love, in the tenderest man-
 ner, both himself, and his majesty, holiness, and
 glory : he cannot conceal or deny his own per-
 fections, nor will he endure to look like a sinner
 for one moment to eternity.—Shall not the judge
 of all the earth do right ? Gen. xviii. 25. The
 LORD is just : I and my people are wicked.
 Exod.

Exod. ix. 27. The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. Pf. cxlv. 17. Righteous art thou, O LORD ! when I plead with thee. Jer. xii. 1. O Lord ! the great and dreadful GOD—righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces. Dan. ix. 4—7. There is no unrighteousness in him. Pf. xcii. 15. Is there unrighteousness with GOD ? GOD forbid. Rom. ix. 14. Is GOD unrighteous who taketh vengeance ? GOD forbid. Rom. iii. 5. GOD is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love. Heb. vi. 10. It is a righteous thing with GOD to render tribulation to them that trouble his people. 2 Thes. i. 6. GOD is just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. Rom. iii. GOD is just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John i. 9. Let GOD be true, and every man a liar. Rom. iii. 4. Abundant in truth. Exod. xxxiv. 6. The only true GOD. John xvii. 3. A GOD of truth. Deut. xxxii. 4. or in the original, GOD THE TRUTH. The words of GOD are pure words, purified seven times. Pf. xii. 6. A faithful GOD. Deut. vii. 9. Great is thy faithfulness. Lam. iii. 23. The faithful creator. 1 Pet. iv. 19. GOD is faithful. 1 Thes. v. 24. He is faithful to forgive us our sins. 1 John i. 9. GOD cannot lie. Titus i. 2. 'Tis impossible for GOD to lie. Heb. vi. 18. Not one thing hath failed
of

of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you : all are come to pass unto you ; not one thing hath failed thereof. Josh. xxiii. 14. There hath not failed one word of all his GOOD PROMISES. 1 Kings viii. 56. God is self-existent, self-sufficient, self-satisfied, and all-sufficient, for the happiness of his creatures. Can a man be profitable to God ? Is it any gain to him. Job xxii. 2, 3. xxxv. 7, 8. He needeth nothing. He giveth life and breath, and all things. Acts xvii. 25. Your father is perfect. Math. v. 48. God, blessed for ever. Rom. i. 25. The blessed and only potentate, dwelling in that light which no man hath seen or can see. 1 Tim. vi. 15.

GOD IS AN HAPPY BEING ; pleased with himself, and rejoicing in his own perfections. Every thing that can make a happy being is to be found in God. He must be infinitely blessed and happy, and nothing can impair his blessedness. Think of every thing that can constitute happiness, and it is to be found in God, in its full perfection. *

1. Does happiness lie in grandeur and dominion ? His empire is universal and eternal.

2. Does it lie in wealth and riches ? All the riches of the universe are in his possession.

3. Does it consist in wisdom and knowledge ? There are all the oceans of wisdom in God.

4. Does

* Dr. Gill's Body of Divinity, vol. 1. p. 211.

4. Does it lie in might, power, and strength? Incomparable and immense power belongs to God.

5. Does happiness lie in pleasure, joy, and unbounded delights? In God's presence is fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

6. Does happiness consist in the highest honour, dignity, and eternal fame? God's honour is infinite, his dignity is undiminifhable, and his fame increafing to eternity. All the beft and brighteft beings in the univerfe inceffantly behold and celebrate his glory, whilft God himfelf feels the higheft joy in his own exiftence, and delights in the profpects of the everlafting happiness of his faints and angels.

Let me intreat you, my dear reader, to ftand ftill and confider the beautiful character of this lovely and adorable God, a moft pure fpirit, unbounded by time, and therefore eternal; unbounded by fpace, and therefore omniprefent; unbounded in power, and therefore omnipotent; having a prefence of power which no force can withftand, a prefence of wifdom which no craft can deceive, and a prefence of goodnefs, love, and bounty, which all the immortal capacities of men and angels can never exhaust. A living felf-aftive fpirit, a fpirit of infinite life without limits, of eternal life without end, immutable life without change, and of perfect life without defect.

defect. A spirit that can produce the most astonishing effects in a moment through heaven, earth, and hell ; and can make, or move, or destroy, a world with a thought. A spirit that has the keenest abhorrence of all moral impurity, and a complacency in the righteousness and goodness of his own nature, and a delight in every rational creature that hath any degree of beautiful resemblance to himself. A spirit who wills and operates according to the shining purity of his divine perfections. A spirit who hath an invariable will to communicate good to the upright, and inflict evil on the wicked ; who has a will to punish sin with shame, and pain, and death ; who has denounced the most dreadful threatenings that he will do it, and will terribly display the actual executions of his wrath. A spirit that scorns all dissimulation and disguises, that can neither deceive nor be deceived. A spirit of the most upright intentions of heart, who gives the most fair representations of his mind without any reserve, who hath no duplicity of conduct, and preserves one uniform character to eternity. A spirit of absolute dominion over all worlds, who has a right to make what creatures he pleases, has a right to govern all the creatures he has made, and hath a right to dispose of all the creatures he doth govern. A spirit of great long-suffering with provoking

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sinners,

sinners, but whose patience will have an end in the sinner's happiness or final destruction. A spirit who exercises a providence over all his creatures; and this providence is nothing but the infinite wisdom, invariable rectitude, immense goodness, almighty power, and inviolable truth and sincerity of God, displayed in the preservation and government of all the worlds of creatures which he hath brought into existence.

This is such a character of God that (if any thing less than special grace were sufficient) would teach an atheist to admire, and make a devil adore.

This 'is the lovely idea of God's beautiful character in Scripture, and what man of sense and integrity is there to be found who is not astonished and delighted with it! what book, besides the Bible, ever exhibited such a picture of consummate beauty and loveliness! But we will endeavour to shew, from Scripture itself, that, in the REDEMPTION of man, God has made an astonishing ADVANCEMENT ON the BEAUTY and GLORY of his OWN CHARACTER, and has rendered himself more venerable, more amiable, more adorable, than he could have been in heaven, in the eyes of the angels of God, to eternity: yea, we will advance a step farther, and dare to affirm, that if God had called into existence a thousand more worlds, stocked with creatures of

the highest order of rational powers, and the greatest splendor of holiness, still he could not have been known in all the glories of his character in the manner he has now discovered himself in the REDEMPTION of man.

Here, and no where else, we see the lost prospects of God's moral perfections restored with additional splendor and beauty, beyond all that reason, in a state of innocence, ever knew.

You see WISDOM beam forth in all its glory in the redemption of lost man ! See here the opposite demands of justice and mercy reconciled and gratified : both gratified to the very uttermost ! See here the honour and righteousness of the law asserted and vindicated in all its pure precepts and dreadful penalties. We see the precepts all obeyed, and the penalties all executed in their fullest terror and glory. *

Here you see God displaying two opposite affections at the same moment and in the same act ; that is to say, the keenest hatred and indignation at sin, and the most ardent love to the sinner.

You see here the powers of darkness vanquished, and the subtilty of hell defeated, by the same nature that Satan had ruined, and in a method quite above the capacity of the devil to understand, or even for one moment to imagine : this strips him of the pride of his understanding, and

* See Charnock on Wisdom.

and lays his craft and malice open to eternal contempt and abhorrence.

You see the wisdom of God, in this most glorious method of salvation, giving us the surest ground of consolation, and the most pungent motives to holy obedience. Here we have **STRONG CONSOLATION**, that is *victorious* to conquer all opposition and triumph over every discouragement, and *durable* to outlive all decay, and survive the ruins of the universe. We have here the most pungent motives to the most shining purity of holiness, arising from the tender mercies of God, the redeeming blood of Christ, and the vital presence of the spirit of God in the soul—motives addressed to all the most lively springs of action and gratitude in the heart.

You see here the wisdom of God in ordering the fittest way of enjoying all the blessings of salvation; not by meer speculative and barren knowledge, which would produce no fruits of gratitude, love, zeal, and obedience; not in the way of a covenant of works, to be performed by man as the condition of eternal happiness—this would puff a fallen creature up with pride, or sink him in utter despair; it would eclipse the glory of absolute grace, and render the sinner's happiness precarious, yea, indeed, impossible. But God has appointed vital faith of his operation and gift, as the general receiver of all God's blessings;

blessings ; and at the same time teaches us to work by love, and bring forth the richest fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.

You see here the wisdom of God in the free and full proclamation of this salvation, as an act of the most boundless goodness, and in the most winning addresses to men, in order to apply this salvation to their immortal souls, in the sweetest methods of rational persuasion and attractive love.

You see the GOODNESS of GOD, in all its meridian splendor and beauty, beam forth in our redemption. God's inclinations and active powers are all influenced by goodness, and terminate in contriving and accomplishing the recovery of lost man to an unbounded happiness in the fruition of God. *

You see goodness the original spring of our whole salvation, and you see here an higher degree of goodness to man than was shewn to the fallen, or even to the standing angels ; nay, higher still ; here are greater displays of goodness than were manifested, for a time, to the Son of God himself.

You see here the purest and most intense goodness forming the first resolution to redeem. This is such a miracle of goodness, that it is above all admiration, 'tis more than unspeakable, 'tis more than full of glory !

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* See Charnock on Goodness,

You see here the lost prospects of infinite *goodness* restored and enlarged unexpressibly beyond what man in innocence ever saw with all the powers of his bright understanding. Those prospects of the good and amiable nature of God were dreadfully withdrawn on man's vile apostacy, but are now restored with a thousand-fold advantage, to the wonder and joy of men and angels !

You see here God giving us a greater gift than all worlds, in sending his own son to redeem us : you see him given to rescue us by death of the most dreadful kind, and exalted and honoured for his humiliation and disgrace in acting and suffering for us !

How marvellously does this goodness appear, considering the first act of treason and revolt from God, and man's black ingratitude and rebellion ever since. He could have fallen no lower at first unless he had fallen into hell ; and the temper and conduct of mankind, in all ages, hath been an avowal of the first horrible offence.

You see higher wonders still : the unutterable goodness of God in the very highest advancement of our nature in Christ, after it had so dreadfully affronted his infinite majesty ; and likewise in dignifying our persons with the most endearing and honourable union to his eternal Son, as our vital head. This astonishing conduct of God appears to be the uttermost exertion of God's unfathomable

unfathomable love and grace ; it puts the very highest honour on our souls and bodies ; it raises them to such a dignity and glory as exceeds all the powers of language to express, or the minds of angels to conceive : and if we add the consideration of the adoption of our persons to be the sons and daughters of God, what can we say ? but O ! the depth of the wisdom, and knowledge, and goodness of God !

In this most glorious and astonishing salvation, you see still farther the goodness of God in its meridian or noon-tide splendor and beauty in this point of view, (*viz.*) God restores us to a more excellent state of holiness and dignity than man had in innocence at his first creation ! We have a more intense union with God, a more vivid image of God stamped upon our souls, a brighter resemblance of all God's moral perfections ; and what is richer still, we have the infallible duration of this holiness secured to us beyond a second forfeiture and loss : we have a more boundless and durable felicity than man possessed in Paradise, and an eternity of empire in God, as lasting as his nature and immortal life.

God's rational and sweet persuasions of man to receive and possess all this happiness are equal to his unutterable love in providing it. Here goodness shines in its brightest radiance and attractive charms.

In

In the redemption of mankind we see the bright and burning HOLINESS of GOD shine out with the utmost splendor and beauty.* Never did the shining purity of GOD's perfections flame out with such dazzling glory as in the salvation of sinners by the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Here we see the eternal consciousness that GOD has of his own dignity and excellence, which fills him with an infinite zeal for his own majesty, dominion, and glory. Here we see the radiant brightness of the divine essence, and his invariable dislike of all moral impurity and disorder in his empire, and his keenest hatred of all the violations of the order and beauty prescribed in his holy law. Here we see, that as power is his arm, omniscience his eye, mercy his bowels, and eternity his duration, so holiness is the beauty and life of GOD: and as sincerity is the life and lustre of every grace in a christian, so PURITY is the life and splendor of every attribute in GOD. Without holiness his patience would be an indulgence in sin, his mercy a fondness, his wrath a madness, his power a tyranny, his wisdom an unworthy craft, his justice a cruelty; but his holiness gives a decorum and beauty to all his perfections, and renders him incapable of acting unlike a GOD. 'Tis the enlivening spirit which spreads a glory and order through them all—'tis the crown and glory of the Godhead——'tis the life of all

* See Charnock on Holiness.

all God's decrees, and the brightness of all his actions. Nothing is thought of or decreed by him; nothing is acted by him; nothing is declared, proposed, promised, threatened, or foretold by him in his word, but what is worthy the dignity, and becoming the honour of this attribute. His law is spiritual and holy in the highest degree, reaching to the very essence, life, and powers of the soul, and all the inward bents, inclinations, and actings of the heart. This law prescribes bounds to the spirits of men, obliging them to inward conformity to it in all their motions and affections. Not a single motion of a thought; nor the quality of a thought, nor the property and circumstance of a thought, in the soul of man, but falls under the cognizance of this spiritual, extensive, and immutable law. And in the sufferings of Christ, who was made under the law, and who redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13. we see the holiness of God shine out with a brighter lustre than it had done before for four thousand years in all the terrible judgments of God on the guilty nations and empires of the world.

God had an ardent and infinite desire to have his holiness honoured to the uttermost, in the sufferings and death of his son; and his holy nature shone out brighter on the cross than had

been shewn in heaven amongst the holy angels for thousands of years. And we may go a step farther, and affirm, that in this method of REDEMPTION by the death of the Son of God, his holiness in the most intense hatred of sin appears to be valued above all his other glorious perfections. Yea, farther, it appeared for a time to be valued above Christ himself; and what is still more astonishing, if possible, Christ appears to have valued the holiness of God above his own life, blood, and character: yea, farther, he was willing to have his own divinity eclipsed for a time, that God's holiness might shine out with the brighter blaze in the hatred and punishment of sin. The holiness of God had powerful reasons for not being neglected in the salvation of sinful man; and it is an awful truth, but we must express it, if God had not shewn such zeal for his own purity, he would have concealed and despised his own life, and have looked like a sinner to eternity.

The JUSTICE of God shines wonderfully in our redemption. Divine justice is a certain and peculiar manifestation of his holiness in the government of his rational creatures; by which, as the supreme law-giver, he prescribes equal and fit laws; and as the supreme judge, he dispenses equal rewards and just punishments.

God alone is fit to fill and manage so great a province

province as that of giving laws to the whole world of souls and angels. There is none like unto thee, O! king of nations. Jer. x. 6, 7. His preservation of all things every moment, and his determining our rational existence, powers, actions, and happiness, from moment to moment, with the profusion of blessings he bestows every minute of our life, give him a just title to absolute dominion over all: and his glorious perfections of wisdom, power, holiness, and justice, do not only fit him for government, but must make his rule over us the most desirable and delightful to all who understand their own interest and happiness. His dominion over us, and in our souls, is the most rational, lovely, beautiful, and endearing government that men or angels can conceive or desire to eternity. 'Tis the truest and sweetest interest of man cheerfully to obey his God: and no man can break the bounds of God's law till he acts in direct contradiction to his very soul, and he must be guilty of a mad outrage on all his best powers and interests for eternity. * These are thoughts that deserve our utmost attention in every minute of our life.

In our redemption we see the Son of God yielding the most perfect assent of understanding, and consent of will, to the holiness and justice of the nature of God; and freely and fully restoring
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* See Halyburton's Great Concern, 22mo.

all the rights of God, which sinners had violently and insolently taken away. And we see the just God, for four thousand years before his death, admitting no souls to happiness but upon the credit of a payment in blood, even the blood of the Son of God.

Not the soul of a patriarch, of a prophet, of a great king, of a great statesman, who faced lions; and heroes who dared the flames for God; nor apostles and martyrs, rolled and dipped in their own blood, could procure the least acceptance with divine holiness and justice, or admission into the glory of heaven, but on the bond and oath, and payment in blood of the Lord Jesus.

And we may proceed still farther and see the tremendous and adorable God preferring the glory of his justice above the display of love to his eternal son. It appeared for a time, that God's affection and zeal for his own justice exceeded his esteem and value for his divine and glorious Son; and Christ appeared to have a greater love for God's justice than he had for his own soul, character, and blood.

What objects are these revealed in this most glorious and immortal volume! Who can for one moment believe, or with patience endure to hear that these are cunningly-devised fables, invented by bad men to put a cheat upon the world! No, sirs, these are the wonderful discoveries

coveries of the boundless wisdom and love of God to perishing mortals, to strike all the passions of fear, hope, gratitude, pleasure, ambition, and glory, with the most persuasive and commanding energy.

O! my dear fellow christians, how should you love God, and habitually rejoice in your dear redeemer for the grand discoveries he has made of the divine perfections, above all that men or angels could *ever* imagine!

How has Christ recovered, restored, and enlarged the lost prospects of God's justice and goodness, mercy, grace, and truth, to men on earth and angels in heaven, beyond what was known for thousands of years before; yea, beyond what will be known of God's justice in the conflagration of our world, and the damnation of devils and wicked men to eternity!

Here his whole name appears compleat;
Nor wit can guess, nor reason prove,
Which of the letters best is writ,
The power, the justice, or the love.

Dr. WATTS.

The SINCERITY and FAITHFULNESS of God in OUR REDEMPTION shines out through heaven and earth with the brightest lustre. God is the most sincere being in the upright intentions of his heart; he is determined never to deceive his creatures:

creatures: he is a being of infinite veracity, in speaking his real sense and thoughts of all things which concern himself and his creatures: he is a being of infinite faithfulness in his conduct, as his actions are conformable to his upright intentions, and the declarations of his words:—so that the whole idea of the divine SINCERITY consists in the upright intentions of his heart, the declarations of his mouth, the operation of his attributes, and the self-consistency of his conduct and character, without the least degree of duplicity or fickleness in his whole deportment in time or to all eternity.

God is sincere by nature and principle, and not only by interest: for God, to be sincere, is to be and to appear the same thing, to scorn all shiftings and disguises in his words of promise and threatenings, and in his conduct; so that God's actions will bear the sun-shine, and to be examined in the clearest light of heaven itself.

How ravishing and delightful is the thought, O! believers, to consider that God acts in such a manner, as that the ends and motive of every action, as well as the action itself, may bear the open light, even the day of eternal, meridian sun-shine in glory.

God would not do an ill thing or speak a false word, although he was absolutely secure against all discovery of it by all creatures in heaven, earth,

earth, and hell.—'Tis impossible for God to lye. Heb. vi. God cannot lye. Titus i. 2. All the springs of lying and falshood are excluded from the nature and conduct of God. He cannot lye through any defect in his understanding; there is no weakness, darkness, or prejudice and error in his mind. He cannot lye through any corruption in his will; there is no wrong direction or vicious determination in his choice. He cannot lye through any irregular passions in his heart. He has no extravagant self-love, no vain ambition, no unjust self-admiration, nor rash anger or unrighteous revenge, no avarice or covetousness to tempt him to speak a lye.—All the above springs of deceit and lying abound in the hearts of men and devils, but they can have no place in God. He cannot lye to keep what he possesses, or to get what he has not, or through shame to save himself from disgrace, or desire to increase his honour and fame. He cannot lye through fear and dread of a superior power, or through weakness of nature or want of strength, to be as good as his word. All these are springs of the most horrible lying amongst men, but they can never have place in God's heart or conduct. O! reviving, ravishing thought! to true christians; for God's sincerity is our immutable and immortal security!

The habitual and immutable sincerity and
faithfulness

faithfulness of God consist in his upright intention and aim to promote the holiness and happiness of every one of his people; without the least variation or reluctance, at all times, and through the whole course of his providence and grace, without the least thought or wish to the contrary entering into his heart. Nothing that God says or does interferes with our true sanctification and happiness; nor does he pursue, as his main aim, any thing that shall hazard the salvation of his people, or render their happiness doubtful in itself: the holiness and felicity of their souls is actually God's intention in every action he performs in the natural and moral world, as well as in the church of Christ.

God speaks the sense of his own mind concerning all things in heaven, earth, and hell; he speaks the real sense of his own mind concerning all his perfections, and especially with regard to his justice in his threatenings to the wicked, and likewise his goodness and grace in his promises to his people, as also concerning the glories of his son's person and offices, and the person and operations of his eternal spirit.

God gives an impartial, clear, and fair representation of his whole heart, concerning all his rational creatures, without the least reserve or deceit, clearly expressing his thoughts, so as to leave us at no kind of loss, what he will do with

us, what he will do for us, in this world and in eternity, if we are his friends; and what he will do with us and against us if we prove his final and impenitent enemies.—I will here give a short, but clear, copy of God's heart towards his people, and towards all those that hate him, and live without God in the world.—The first I would stile,

The DECLARATION of GOD's HEART towards
his FRIENDS.

I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. Heb. viii. 10. I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 2 Cor. vi. 16. God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Rev. xxi. 3. God is not ashamed to be called their God. Heb. xi. 16. Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. Jer. xxx. 22. I am your God, saith the LORD. Ezek. xxxiv. 31. Fear thou not, I am thy God. Isai. xli. 10. Thy maker is thy husband; the God of the whole earth. liv. 5. This God is our God for ever and ever. Ps. xlviii. 14. I will give them a heart to know me that I am the LORD, and they shall return to me with their whole heart. Jer. xxiv. 7. I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Jer. xxxi. 3. Precious in my sight, and honourable, and I have loved thee. Isai. xliii. 4. I will rejoice over them to do

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them

them good—with my whole heart and my whole
 soul. Jer. xxxii. 41. I will love them freely.
 Hosea xiv. 4. The LORD thy God in the midst
 of thee is mighty; he will save; he will rejoice
 over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he
 will joy over thee with singing. Zeph. iii. 17.
 The LORD delighteth in thee. Isai. lxii. 4. As
 the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall
 thy God rejoice over thee. Ver. 5. Herein is
 love, not that we loved God, but that he loved
 us. 1 John iv. 10. God is love; he that dwelleth
 in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.
 1 John iv. 16. He shall feed his flock like a
 shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his
 arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently
 lead. Isai. xl. 11. If any man love me he shall
 be loved of my father, and I will love him, and
 will manifest myself to him; and we will come to
 him, and make our abode with him. John xiv.
 18, 21. Truly our fellowship is with the father,
 and with his son Jesus Christ. 1 John i. 3. If
 any man hear my voice, and open the door, I
 will come in to him, and will sup with him, and
 he with me. Rev. iii. 20. I will pour out my
 spirit unto you. Prov. i. 23. My spirit shall
 not depart. Isai. lix. 21. The spirit of the
 LORD shall lift up a standard against him. lix. 19.
 I will put my spirit within you, and cause you
 to walk in my statutes. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. How
 much

much more shall your heavenly father give the holy spirit to them that ask him. Luke xi. 13. If thou knewest the gift of God—he would have given thee living water—the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life. John iv. 10—14. Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water—this spake he of the spirit. John vii. 38, 39. I will pray the father, and he shall give you another comforter; even the spirit of truth—who shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance. John xiv. 16—26. Ye have received the spirit of adoption—the spirit helpeth our infirmities. Rom. viii. 15, 26. The spirit beareth witness with our spirit. Ver. 16. Ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise. Eph. i. 13. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost, which is given to us. Rom. v. 5. Another comforter shall abide with you for ever—I will not leave you comfortless. John xiv. 16, 18. The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. Rom. xiv. 17.

These glorious declarations are a copy of God's gracious heart towards his people on earth; and it will be your wisdom, as much as it is your duty and happiness, O! believers, to revolve these rich portions of the covenant of grace every day in your mind and affections. These precious

and fair representations have the highest tendency to raise your understanding to higher esteem for the excellent nature of God, excite you to a more intense desire after his presence, urge you to a more ardent good-will towards him and his interest, and cherish in your souls a more vigorous and intense delight in his lovely character, and bring you by degrees to an habitual joy in God, which will give an invincible strength to your hearts, and be an happiness as large as your wishes, and immortal as your existence.

We will now give a short clear representation of God's heart towards his enemies, to the end that they may know what they are to expect from his justice if they proceed in their TREASON and REBELLION. The LORD Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the GOSPEL of our LORD Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired by all them that believe. 2 Thes. i. 7—10. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. Ps. ix. 17. Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Ps. l. 22. It is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made

made them will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them will shew them no favour. *Isai. xxvii. 11.* Surely these are poor, they are foolish; for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment, i. e. the wise determination and counsel of their God—I will get me to the great men; for they have known the way of the LORD: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds. *Jer. v. 4, 5.* He that believeth not shall be damned. *Mark xvi. 16.* He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. *John iii. 18.* If thou wilt not hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, in the field, in thy basket and store, in the fruit of thy body and thy land, in thy kine, sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou goest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. *Deut. xxviii. 15—21.*

Who shall dwell with devouring fire? who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? *Isai. xxxiii. 14.* Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee? *Ezek. xxii. 14.* The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived: neither FORNICATORS, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves

themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor COVETOUS, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. If any man love not the LORD Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha, i. e. accursed when the LORD shall come. Whoremongers and adulterers GOD will judge. Heb. xiii. 4. If any man shall worship the beast and his image, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the lamb. Rev. xiv. 9, 10. This is one of the most dreadful threatenings in the whole book of God! (Doddridge in loc.) may the friends of the most corrupt religion weigh its awful contents, that they may keep at the greatest possible distance from this horrible curse! He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still. For without are dogs, and forcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lye. Rev. xxii. 11, 15.

Thus you see, my dear reader, that God's SINCERITY gives us a plain account of all the GOOD things we may expect from him in a way of duty, and all the EVIL and dreadful things we may expect from him in a way of sin and rebellion
against

against him : and let me observe, that, of all the sins which provoke God to pour out his curses on an individual, or a city, or a nation, there is none equal in guilt to the sin of infidelity, or the rejection of the LORD Jesus and his glorious gospel.

God never cheats us with lies ; or by flattering words and fair speeches, raising our hopes and desires too high ; or, by cold, dry words and haughty reserves, and dark, distant expressions, sinking our expectations too low : but he wisely adjusts his promises to our real wants ; and, like a tender and affectionate father, gives us a most free, full, and fair account of all the temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings we may expect from him ; and we may be confident of what I would stile,

An ardent and combined application of all the perfections of God, in order to the actual execution of all his designs, and the steady fulfilment of all his purposes and promises, without any stated reserves, or allowed exceptions for one single moment. Sincerity animates him in the whole extent of his wise conduct and glorious administration : he will not deceive us in one instance. For God to speak contrary to his sense of things, or repugnant to truth shining in his mind, and with a design to deceive, would be a wilful lye ; it would be an outrage on his very nature,

nature, a violation of the inward sentiments of his heart, a force, even to violence, put upon the inclinations of his pure and holy soul.

As God is animated by sincerity, and ardently actuated by a most mighty and infinite love of truth; and as he is intirely directed by faithfulness as his eternal law; therefore he cannot pretend to friendship where he has none, nor make promises of kindness where none is intended; nor can he act a false or unfriendly part after his promises are made, and his professions of love and regard are published and brought home to his people's hearts. God never declares one word more of friendship than he really feels for that soul to whom he speaks; and he scorns to flatter men or angels even for a single moment.

He disdains to make pretensions of friendship on purpose to deceive, or to have an advantage over us, to impose upon us, to seduce us, to cheat, disappoint, and vex our souls, as artful men and deceitful devils always do, on purpose to ruin the objects of their fatal and ruinous seduction.

He abhors, with all the intense hatred of a God, to use crafty insinuations and soft speeches to ensnare us: his infinite sincerity, his ardent integrity of heart, urges him to do nothing, to say nothing, to think nothing, but what is fair and open, free, friendly, and faithful, that will bear the light of heaven and the severest scrutiny
of

of men and angels. He uses none but fair and open dealings in all his actions, and transactions with the whole world of mankind.

God speaks very seriously, very earnestly, and very warmly too, whenever he speaks at all, either to saints or sinners, to friends or foes: he leaves no man at a loss for his meaning, and what he will do for him if he is a friend of God, and what he will do most dreadfully against him if he shall be found an enemy: he speaks in the flaming fire of love in every word of promise, and in the ardent fire of wrath in every word of his threatenings to the wicked and ungodly.

All these views should give us the highest veneration for the inspired Scriptures of God, a mighty and unbounded confidence in his promises; and a most vigorous and perpetual imitation of his inflexible INTEGRITY and inviolable faithfulness.

REC O L L E C T I O N.

Let us, my dear reader, stand still for a few moments, and review the ground we have trod: 'tis delightful ground; 'tis the soil of Paradise; 'tis the garden of God: they are the fields of beauty and joy we have travelled over, and the prospect is pleasant and lovely whether we look backward or forward, or all around. We may say with delight and wonder, O! how great is

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thy goodness, and how great is thy beauty. Zech. ix. 17. How excellent is thy loving kindness, O ! God ; therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. Ps. xxxvi. 7. O ! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and goodness of God. Rom. xi. 33.

We have considered what are the wants and wishes of an immortal soul, that knows its own highest and eternal interest and happiness, and have found that it consists in a clear and familiar acquaintance with God, in a special knowledge of his attributes, in large and comprehensive prospects of God, and in deep and durable impressions of his lovely perfections on our minds, in order to produce in us the very best affections towards him, the utmost confidence in his power and faithfulness, the most profound submission to his dominion, and the most cordial and cheerful obedience to his laws.

We have drawn out the scriptural character of this most sublime and glorious being, and have proceeded to shew, how he has made a most astonishing advancement on his own character in the redemption of the church by the LORD Jesus Christ. We have taken new prospects of the exquisite wisdom and prudence of God in contriving our redemption—the unfathomable goodness of God in giving Christ—the holiness of God in

fixing the order and beautifying the whole work of salvation—the justice of God in punishing sin, and becoming the guardian of this salvation. We have seen that the JUSTICE of God is an ardent and immutable regard to the rights of the divine nature, with a determined resolution to preserve those rights inviolate to eternity: and in the redemption of man, we have viewed divine justice as shining out in its brightest terror and glory. We have taken a sweet and charming prospect of the sincerity of God, as it consists in the upright intention of his heart to speak the truth, the clear and naked words of truth—in the determinate inclinations of his will to exert his perfections agreeably to his words of promise and threatening, and his intire self-consistency of character, scorning all duplicity of conduct, and always acting with the dignity of a God.

And now, my dear reader, if you are a true christian, let me invite you to join with me in an act of joy and triumph in this most lovely and adorable God. He has made himself over to us in those glorious words, which are a compendium of the covenant of grace:—I will be to you a God, and ye shall be to me a people. Heb. viii. 10. And what doth these precious words include, my dear christian brother? what are the delightful contents of this fundamental promise of the new covenant? Let me attempt

to spread abroad the sense of them in the following exposition. His spiritual nature is suited to our spirits; his immutability is the security of our happiness; his eternity is the duration of our felicity; his omnipresence is our constant and sociable friend; his life and omnipotence is the life and strength of our minds; his omniscience is our watchful and kind overseer; his wisdom is our constant guide; his goodness our inexhaustible treasure; his grace covers all our unworthiness; his mercy pardons all our guilt; his love is the light and joy of our hearts; his patience spares our comforts and our lives; his holiness is the fountain of our sanctification; his justice is the guardian of our rights, and the avenger of our injuries; his sincerity is the basis of all our hopes; and his veracity and faithfulness are the everlasting security of our eternal salvation! What a God is this, my friend! and what ground have we for habitual love to him, and habitual joy in him, as our own covenant God for ever and ever!

Thus far we have advanced in our DEMONSTRATION of the divine Inspiration of the Scriptures, from the first grand source of evidence, (viz.) the goodness of the doctrines, laws, and promises, contained in the Scriptures; and I trust we have made good our ground as we go on. But, let it be observed, my appeal is chiefly to the
wise

wise and serious christian, who is the best judge of the force of this glorious and sublime argument : at the same time I would wish to elevate the minds of younger christians to more enlarged prospects of our holy religion ; and I fear not to say, likewise, to enable them to stand the fiercest shocks of infidelity, bid defiance to all ridicule, and triumph over all opposition from earth and hell.—Review, my friends, again and again, the nature of Inspiration, and this convincing evidence of its reality : and let me proceed to observe, that the argument is far from being exhausted ; we must, therefore, resume the consideration of it, and carry on the demonstration with farther degrees of light and evidence : 'tis a theme worthy of the eternal contemplation of angels, and 'tis a subject that has the highest and happiest tendency to dignify our understandings, to give strength and life to our recollective powers, to spread a sacred warmth and fire through all our best affections, to inspire a deep satisfaction and peace into our consciences, and fix our hearts with an unshaken attachment to our divine master, and fire us with a zeal for his glory, immortal as our existence. Let us then, my dearest friends, address ourselves afresh to these object of wonder and beauty, and plunge our souls, with unbounded rapture, into this unfathomable ocean of truth and love, revealed in the glorious gospel of the blessed God

In

In this sacred volume we see the lost prospects of GOD'S RELATIONS TO OUR WORLD, and to MAN, restored and asserted in the most clear and expressive language. GOD is declared to be the maker of the world. In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth. Gen. i. Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Rev. iv. 11. Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and seas, and all things that are therein, and thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. Neh. ix. 6. And GOD said, let us make man in our image. Gen. i. 26. The LORD GOD formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Gen. ii. 7. All souls are mine, Ezek. xviii. 4. The souls which I have made, Isai. lvii. 16. He formeth the spirit of man within him. Zech. xii. 1. There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding. Job xxxii. 8. The spirit of GOD hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. xxxiii. 4. The LORD hath made all things for himself. Prov. xvi. 4. The judge of all the earth. Gen. xviii. 25. For *of him* as the efficient cause, and *through him* as the preserving and directing cause, and *to him* as the final cause, are all things, to whom be glory for ever,

ever. Amen. Rom. xi. 36. Thus you see God is the creator, the owner, governor, and judge, of all mankind; and these relations of God to the world and to man are displayed in the strongest light in the holy Scriptures: we are here assured, that in his hand our breath is, and his are all our souls and ways; and him we ought to glorify as the last end of the whole creation, and the highest end of man.

You see here the original PERFECTIONS and BEAUTIES of the SOUL of the first man painted in strong and lively colours, as made upright and after the image of God, as consisting in knowledge, holy dispositions of heart, and pure affections of love, and intense delight in his creator. You see here described, in the most awful manner, the ORIGINAL APOSTACY, TREASON, and REBELLION of the first parents of mankind. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death hath passed upon all men: for in him (i. e. Adam) all have sinned. Rom. v. 12. Man is covered with ignorance and darkness in his understanding; the death of sin is in all his powers; he is obstinate and perverse in his dispositions towards God; his carnal mind is enmity against God; * vitiated and corrupted in his conscience; and under the dominion of sin in his thoughts, volitions, and affections. The thoughts
of

* See Charnock's awful discourse on Man's Enmity to God. 8vo.

of his heart only evil all the day. Gen. vi. 5. (Heb.) Without strength, and ungodly. Rom. 5. And we are all children of wrath, even as others. Ephes. ii. 3.—In this sacred book the clearest discoveries are made of the great evil of sin, and of that wickedness and corruption of all kinds in which mankind are universally involved; and the consequence of this must have been, that, when they were thoroughly convinced of the evil of their horrid ways, a sense of their aggravated guilt would fill them with awful thoughts of the divine vengeance justly due to them for their manifold offences.

It pleased God, therefore, in his sovereign grace and wisdom, so to order it, that the GOSPEL DISPENSATION opened with a free and glorious proclamation of pardoning mercy. Men were assured, that, upon their returning to God, through Jesus Christ, the great saviour, whom he had provided, by a humble faith and sincere repentance, their past iniquities should be forgiven them; they should be received into the divine favour, and admitted to the most glorious hopes and PRIVILEGES: at the same time, the most holy and excellent laws and precepts were given them, for instructing and directing them in their duty. And God condescended to deal with them in the way of a gracious covenant, which contained the most clear and express promises of eternal

eternal life and happiness.—See Dr. Leland's admirable work, intituled, *The Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation.* 2 vols. 4to. 1764. Vol. 2. p. 256.

This glorious and immortal book, in the last and best dispensation of the gospel, shews us the goodness of God bursting out all at once with a flood of grace and glory, from the very bottom of his heart, towards lost mortals: the ministry of Christ and his apostles opened itself with the discovery of the highest wonders in the universe, even the deep and eternal love of God to miserable mankind sinners. We have here ideas of things past in eternity beyond the verge of reason; we have ideas of invisible objects, now present, beyond the reach of the natural understanding; and we are furnished with ideas of objects and transactions invisible and future, beyond the bounds and extent of reason, on purpose to elevate, dignify, and improve the mind of man with new views of God to eternity.

But, my dear reader, we must break off this Contemplation in this place, that it may not be disproportionate to the rest, and resume it in the next.—I trust you will agree with me in this

R E M A R K.

That we have already brought our demonstration to such an issue, that every person who shall read the three last Contemplations with attention

No. VII.

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and common sense, must, if he has any integrity, acknowledge, that the Scriptures are not the invention of men, but must be given by Inspiration from God; and, consequently, christianity is true, and a divine revelation. Indeed, my reader, if this be not acknowledged, you must renounce your understanding, abandon all pretensions to reason, and commence a brute for life.

Select BOOKS on the Subject of this CONTEMPLATION.

1. *THE RELIGION OF JESUS DELINEATED*, 4to. 1726. By the excellent Mr. John Reynolds.—This is such a lovely display of the beauty and excellence of the christian religion, that I have no words to express my sense of its worth: if my readers have not seen it, they have a most exquisite satisfaction yet to come.

2. Dr. John Leland in his view of the Deistical Writers. Vol. 1. 8vo. —Towards the close he has given us such a beautiful picture in miniature of the christian religion, as will please every man of sense and true taste if he shall read it over a thousand times.

3. And in his last and greatest work, styled, *The Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation*, vol. 2. part 2. chap. 13. he has given us a view of the excellencies of christianity on a larger scale, and 'tis carried on with unutterable spirit, fervour, and beauty, for near 40 pages together, in the quarto edition; and, while it does honour to revelation, gives us, at the same time, a charming view of the goodness and beauty of the doctor's heart!

4. If my reader desires farther edification and pleasure from this enchanting theme, let him read Dr. Doddridge's preface to the 3d volume of the *Family Expositor*; Hervey's *Rhapsody on the Blessings of the Gospel*, dialogue 17; and Mr. John Brine's *Sermon on the Glory of the Gospel*, preached at Kettering, May 23, 1762.

A
CONTEMPLATION
ON THE
GOODNESS AND BEAUTY
OF
SCRIPTURE,
WITH A
CONCISE VIEW
OF THE
MIRACLES.

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CONTEMPLATION



CHRISTUR

CONCISE VIEW

MIRACLES

MIRACLES

A CONTEMPLATION

ON THE

GOODNESS AND BEAUTY

OF

SCRIPTURE.

ON BEAUTY and TASTE.—The SCRIPTURES give us an astonishing PROSPECT of the divine and infinite SATISFACTION of CHRIST.—Of his glorious RIGHTEOUSNESS for our JUSTIFICATION.—Of vital UNION with CHRIST.—ADoption and SANCTIFICATION.—Of the ASSISTANCES of the HOLY SPIRIT.—The SCRIPTURES enforce, beautify, and enlarge the LAW of NATURE; and give us most striking EVIDENCES of the IMMORTALITY of the SOUL.—The most noble and divine MOTIVES addressed to the best SPRINGS of ACTION in the SOUL; and point out the most glorious EMPLOYMENT in GOOD WORKS all through LIFE.—We have here the most lovely EXAMPLES of HOLINESS and a generous TEMPER.—The richest and strongest CONSOLATIONS under the troubles of LIFE, and against the TERRORS of DEATH.—We have here the most unbounded SCENES of the TERRORS and GLORIES of the RESURRECTION of the DEAD;

DEAD; the last JUDGMENT; with the final STATE of MISERY and HAPPINESS of MANKIND in ETERNITY.—The nature of MIRACLES, with a view of the principal MIRACLES of the OLD and NEW TESTAMENT, as a striking EVIDENCE of their DIVINE INSPIRATION.

WE have already observed, that the goodness of the doctrine of Scripture consists in its fitness to remove all our sin and misery, and to prepare us for happiness in the knowledge, resemblance, and fruition of God. We hope that something has been done in the last Contemplation to evince this truth. We shall now resume that delightful subject: but permit us first to say a few words ON BEAUTY and TASTE.

BEAUTY is that quality in objects which excites love.

Beauty is of various kinds. Thus there is a beauty in the visible heavens and the earth; a beauty in the various creatures below man; a beauty in our own species; a beauty of person, of countenance, voice, temper, manners, and behaviour; a beauty in virtue and the graces of the heart; a beauty in thoughts, expressions, and eloquence; and what is the highest beauty of all, a beauty in the discoveries and truths of the Scripture. The final cause of intellectual and moral beauty is to raise agreeable ideas in the mind, and to attach our souls inviolably and eternally

eternally to God, who is the supreme beauty as well as the final cause of our immortal souls.

TASTE is a power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature and divine revelation.

Taste is an internal, strong, active power, feelingly alive to every fine impulse of truth, goodness, and beauty; with a quick and keen disgust at every object that appears EVIL, deformed, base, and indecent, and fit to do us hurt*.

Taste is a clear, lively, and distinct perception of all the beauty, truth, and justness of the thoughts and expressions which compose a discourse or treatise: it distinguishes what is conformable to eloquence and propriety in every character, and suitable in different circumstances; and whilst, with a delicate and exquisite sagacity, it notes the graces, turns, manners, and expressions most likely to please, it perceives all the defects which produce the contrary effect, and distinguishes precisely wherein those defects and blemishes consist, and how far they are removed from the strict rules of eloquence and the real beauties of nature.

This happy faculty of taste is a kind of natural reason, wrought up to perfection by a refined education,

* Read Mr. Addison's admirable papers on Imagination and Taste, Vol. 6. No. 411.—421. And Dr. Akenfide on the Pleasures of Imagination, in three parts, 8vo.

education, close attention, and thought; by lively converse with the wisest of mankind; and, above all, by a lively converse with the great friend and teacher of man, the only wise God, our saviour. *

This good taste is not confined to literature; it takes in, also, all sciences and branches of knowledge. It consists, therefore, in a certain, just, and exact discernment, which points out to us, in each of the branches of knowledge, whatever is most curious, beautiful, and useful; whatever is most essential, suitable, or necessary to those who apply to it; how far, consequently, we should carry the study of it; what ought to be removed from it; and what deserves a particular application and preference before the rest.

ROLLIN, p. 51.

In the sacred Scriptures we have objects full of grandeur to astonish, newness to surprize, and beauty to excite love, and to please the most correct, sublime, and devotional taste; we will proceed to view some farther discoveries of divine revelation, which dignify the understanding, and spread life and joy through all the powers of the soul.

In this glorious volume you see captives to an almighty conqueror, rescued by a divine and infinite

* Read Rollin's *Reflections on a good Taste, in his admirable Method of Study*. Vol. 1. p. 41.—53. Eng. edit. 12mo.

finite redemption, paid by an almighty redeemer : you see rebels and traitors reconciled to their glorious and offending sovereign by the divine and infinite sacrifice of an holy and heavenly priest : you see guilty criminals saved from the just sentence of an inexorable judge, by the punishment of a divine surety, who has made a real and PERFECT SATISFACTION to the essential justice of God.

You see a DIVINE and INFINITE RIGHTEOUSNESS prepared and provided by God himself, and placed to our account * for our pardon and justification ; and in this act we see God acting, at one and the same moment, as a most awful judge, and a most amiable father towards his dear children.

You see all pride in our righteousness scorned and demolished, and all presumption on the goodness and grace of God, without the right use of the means and the practice of holiness and good works, cut off from every man in the world who shall pretend to call himself a christian. Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ? God forbid !

You

* The Greek verb which we render impute, has four senses, viz. to think of—to judge—to reason with—and to impute or place to account : and all these senses may be admitted, with great propriety, in God's act of justifying a sinner by the divine and infinite righteousness of Christ ; for he thought of it with delight—he judged it fit for us—he reasoned with his justice and holiness concerning it—and he places it to our account as our justifying righteousness.

You see here the most astonishing and honourable CONNEXIONS between God and man thrown open to our ravished eyes. God a father, and we his beloved children; Christ our vital head, and we the members of his spiritual body: he appears in the relation of a divine friend, and forming a union of souls by means of a divine nature. And let me desire my reader to remark with attention and wonder, that all the unions in the natural and moral world which imply strength, support, and fruitfulness—beauty and honour—usefulness and riches—pleasure and joy: in fine, all the unions that can fire the noblest ambition, and inspire the highest glory and boasting in God, are selected in Scripture to illustrate the union between Christ and every true christian. Thus we have a foundation and the structure of the temple—a corner stone and the building—a root and the tree—a vine and the branches—a graft and the stock—an advocate and his client—a representative and his constituents—a surety and debtors—a tutor and his pupils—a master and his servants—a king and his subjects—a father and his children—a friend with a friend—a brother with brother—a bridegroom and bride—a head and members—the soul and body—an union of soul with soul; for he that is joined (kollomenos, glued) to the Lord is one spirit with him. 1 Cor. vi. 17. Yea, we are not only
said

said to be members of his body, of his flesh, and his bones, and one spirit with the Lord; but, what is a higher wonder still, our union with Christ is compared to the union of God the father with his son, and of God the son with his divine father. John xvii. 21. What reason have we to glory and boast in our most honourable connexions with the Lord Jesus! Let us then freely indulge a mixture of joy and self-love with self-approbation, arising from a lively consciousness of our interest in Christ, who is the highest person in the world, and the fountain of good, of honour, beauty, and pleasure to our souls.

This sacred volume reveals the glorious privilege of ADOPTION, which is a blessing of grace that exceeds all other blessings: it even exceeds redemption, pardon, justification, and sanctification. A man may be redeemed out of a state of slavery by a king's ransom; may be pardoned by his prince, though he has been a rebel and a traitor to him; and may be acquitted from high crimes laid to his charge, and yet not be a king's son; if adopted and taken into his family, it must be by another and distinct act of royal favour; and it is more to be a son than a saint; so that to be predestinated to the adoption of children is something over and above sanctification, and what exceeds being chosen to be holy, and without blame before God.*

This

* See Dr. Gill's Body of Div. Vol. 2. p. 323.

This glorious book shews us, in a strong and vivid light, the necessity, the nature, excellency, and beauty of REGENERATION and CONVERSION of the heart to God. We here see the divine Spirit infusing a new life into the soul, and bringing us into a state of spiritually-active existence in all the powers and affections of the mind, producing a new disposition and ability to live to God in holy obedience—restoring the lost image of God afresh on the soul—and inscribing the divine law on the heart, and giving us a lively sense of its vast extent and duration, and giving an ardent bent or inclination to obey that law—passing a new change on the apprehensions of the mind, creating a new choice in the will, and inspiring a new taste for all that is beautiful and lovely in the revelation of God; giving us new passions of wonder, love, hatred, hope and fear, joy and sorrow, and pointing the affections towards the best objects in the heavenly world. This divine change is the beauty, life, and joy of the soul, and renders it a most lovely creature in the eye of God himself.

This sacred volume assures us of the most suitable and faithful ASSISTANCES of the HOLY SPIRIT of God in every part of religion, and in the whole course of evangelical holiness to the end of life. We see here the divine Spirit assist the understanding to receive, discern, and retain
 spiritual

spiritual ideas of heavenly objects: he awakens our recollection and enlivens our memory: he guides the conscience to an honest decision, and thus secures us from self-flattery and despair: he influences our wills to a free and good determination: he fixes our volatile attention, and thus assists us in holy contemplations: he regulates and directs our passions to their proper objects in heaven and earth: and he aids our executive powers in the ease and pleasure of religious action.

How necessary! how welcome! how richly endearing is such gracious assistance from God to creatures so weak and insufficient as we are for every good work, and how grateful ought we to be to that good Spirit who enlightens our darkness, infuses and cherishes a savoury taste for the sweetness of the gospel; inspires us with an active and ardent zeal for the glory of Christ; suppresses our aversions, and cures our sad indifference of heart to God; conquers our reluctance to duty, and excites all the graces of the mind into a lively and glowing exercise towards the several objects of our free agency in heaven and earth.

The Scriptures enforce, beautify, and enlarge the LAW of NATURE, and furnish out a most compleat system of NATURAL RELIGION and MORAL PHILOSOPHY. Our infidels act an unjust and absurd part, when they set up natural religion, and
extol

extol morality in opposition to the Bible. There is not a single article of natural religion, or one branch of the most refined morals left out of the sacred Scriptures : all is to be found in its highest perfection in our Bible, stated in the most clear and lovely manner that can enter into the human imagination.

The LAW of NATURE is the will of God, relating to human souls and actions, grounded in the eternal difference of moral good and evil, and because discoverable by natural light, obligatory upon all mankind.

This law is demonstrated from the consideration of the divine and human nature, beheld in one view, and in the relation that God and man bear to each other.

We can demonstrate, that there is a natural and essential difference between virtue and vice, and those several actions and dispositions which are denoted by these two opposite terms.

Natural reason, or the understanding of man, discovers it to be the will of God, in this case, that every man should look upon this essential and eternal difference in the nature of tempers and actions, as a law or rule which he is always to observe.

On a survey of the nature of God and the nature of man in one view, and in the relation they

they bear to each other, it will appear that some tempers and actions are conformable to the nature of God and man ; and other tempers and actions are not conformable to the nature of God, but are opposite to his will, and hurtful to the nature and felicity of man. There must be, therefore, a natural and essential difference between those several actions and dispositions, which are denoted by those two opposite terms, virtue and vice, fin and holiness ; which must be evident from these considerations :

Man is a lover of himself : he has a desire of his own happiness and perfection. Man is a reasonable being, and his reason makes him capable of receiving a law from his maker to rule his appetites and passions. Man is a sociable being : his inclinations carry him to society. Man is a lover of beauty and decorum : and this taste exerts itself in all mankind ; and the more he is improved by education, this regard to beauty is still more visible. Man is a creature formed capable of religion : is dependent every moment on God, and has a power of knowing on whom he depends ; and has an awe of God, his creator, on his mind.—Now lay all these together, and the natural difference between virtue and vice appears at first sight.

Natural reason discovers it to be the will of God, that every man should look upon the dif-

ference in the nature of things, as a law or rule of action, which he is always to observe, under pain of his maker's displeasure.

God, as he is infinitely good, cannot but will the perfection and happiness of his creatures; but, as he is just, he may will to punish guilty creatures.

He who has given existence to rational beings, must, if he be wise, and sees no reason to depart from his original purpose, will their preservation.

GOD has designed the nature of things as an INTERPRETATION OF HIS WILL.

The essential rectitude of the divine nature is an incontestible demonstration of the law of nature.—The will of God in this matter appears with farther evidence, from the provision and wise cautions he hath made to secure the observation of all the dictates of right reason, or the law of nature, by planting several instincts and passions in the soul of man, subservient to his duty, and disposing him to practise it. God hath shewn it to be his will, that men should practise virtue, by so forming the mind, that maxims of truth, containing the principal duties of morality, are no sooner understood than assented to; even by persons not capable of exact reasoning, as children, and others whose understanding

standing is much of the same size as theirs; and by others who, though they have reason, are not well accustomed to use it.—Thus we have shewn, that natural reason discovers it to be the will of God, that every man should look upon this difference, in the nature of actions and things, as a law or rule, which he is always strictly to observe, under pain of his maker's displeasure.

These are the heads of the clearest demonstration of the law of nature that, perhaps, was ever written by an English pen.*—But, after all, my reader, what influence will this fine proof have upon the bulk of mankind? Not one in ten thousand will ever be at the pains to read with attention, or understand the force of the evidence. However clear, elegant, and forcible it may be, yet such is the weak and dissipated state of the human mind, that we shall not be brought to the practice of virtue in its various branches, without a superior light, which shall warm and even fire the soul with the love and admiration of the beauty and excellence of a resemblance to the moral perfections of God.

Our glorious volume of Inspiration, in a few lines, has enlarged and beautified the law of nature beyond all that reason ever knew.—Thou shalt

* Mr. Henry Grove's Moral Philos. Vol. 2. The Explication and Proof of the Law of Nature. — See it copied in the Preceptor, p. 263.

shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matth. xxii. 37—40. *

Our Lord Jesus, in his glorious sermon on the mount, has explained the law of nature in the clearest manner: he has enlarged and beautified this grand original, eternal law, beyond all former expositors, and has given such a sublime view of its spiritual extent as will never be equalled to the end of the world.

When we hear this most glorious law-giver say, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Whosoever shall break the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven——whosoever is angry with his brother, without

* HOMER was a poet of the most rich, daring, and unbounded imagination: SOCRATES was the wisest moral philosopher: PLATO was the most sublime genius: ARISTOTLE the most sagacious metaphysician: and DEMOSTHENES the most eloquent and powerful orator amongst the Greeks. CICERO was a man of universal knowledge, and of the richest genius amongst the Romans; and SENECA was the most brilliant moralist that ever lived in the Pagan world:—but neither ARISTOTLE in his Ethics, nor TULLY in his Offices, nor SENECA in his Moral Essays, have demonstrated the law of nature, from its prime foundations, as MR. GROVE has done. And what was the reason they did not? truly this was the reason: he had divine revelation to enlighten and guide him, and they had not; and I firmly believe that the whole wretched world of pagan minds never could have done it.

without a cause, shall be in danger of judgment—whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart—pluck out lusts as dear to us as the right eye—cut off right hands—swear not at all—love your enemies—bless them that curse you—deny yourselves—take up your cross daily—forgive seventy times seven in a day. I say, when we read such strict and pure precepts as these, which transcend all the imperfect mangled rules of the Pagan moralists, and all the systems of the wisest philosophers in the world, we have just reason to suspect that our deists have as keen a quarrel with the precepts of our divine master as they have with the sublime doctrines of his gospel!

The Scriptures give us the most striking evidences of the IMMORTALITY of the SOUL.

Here you have the only true account of the origin of the soul, as coming from the breath of God: you see its nature as a spirit, that is, an invisible substance, with life and action, understanding and will, and endued with immortality. You have in the sacred volume such accounts of death, as represent the soul departing from the body, and of souls which have returned to their bodies again; and you have a clear view of souls now existing in an invisible world of happiness in heaven, and of misery in hell. In the light of

divine revelation you see the vast capacities of the soul, its amazing resemblance to God, the dignity of its powers, and the grandeur of its passions; especially its strong and boundless ambition, arising from vast admiration of infinite beauty, and intense desire after infinite good; which desire is incessant and eternal as our existence.

On the principles of revelation, we see the infinite worth of the human soul. To save this soul God employed his eternal mind: to redeem this soul the Son of God came down to dwell in the dust: one soul cost more than the starry heavens, more than the worth of all the angels of God: to convince this soul, the holy Spirit has, in a moment, produced visible changes in the order of nature: to instruct and entertain this soul he has given a divine revelation of the glorious gospel, and raised up the best men in all ages to employ their immortal powers and talents: to refine and enlarge this soul he has exerted his sanctifying grace: to inhabit this soul, the eternal Spirit came down from heaven: to wash this soul the blood of God was shed: to cloath this soul the righteousness of God is wrought out: to beautify this soul divine grace is given: to comfort this soul the promises of God are made: to guard this soul legions of angels are every moment on the wing: to destroy
this

this soul the devil's legions are hourly employed : to serve the interests of this soul the structure of the world is preserved : yea, for the sake of this soul, the world itself was created : on the behalf of this soul the Lord Jesus incessantly pleads before the throne ; to defend and preserve this soul God's infinite perfections are every moment exerted : to establish the peace, purity, and strength of this soul, God swears a most tremendous OATH : and to raise the powers and happiness of this soul to eternal heights ; all heaven is prepared, and God absolutely and irrevocably bestows himself.

O ! my reader, what infinite madness and self-murder is it to NEGLECT that precious soul of thine, by taking no deep care to have its wounds healed, its wants supplied, its welfare secured, and a watch over its best interests kept up. To ABUSE this soul is still greater madness ; and surely you ought to stand in amazement and horror at yourself, to think how you have defiled your soul with lust, deceived it with errors, distracted it with frivolous worldly cares, devoted it to the devil, and divided for it a portion of worldly dross and dung : and, what is an higher degree of self-murder and guilt, you have run your soul upon the most desperate HAZARD ;* you have exposed it to God's flaming vengeance ; you have embarked it upon a rotten bottom ; and you have

* See Mr. Henry's Sermon on despising our Souls.

have pawned your soul to the devil for one moment's lying lust, and pleasure ; for all unlawful pleasure is but the lye of a moment. Pause, ponder, tremble ; ponder, pause, and tremble at yourself.

This divine book gives the only true account of the NATURE and BEAUTY OF VITAL HOLINESS.

HOLINESS is the intentional and direct conformity of the will, in its state of spiritual liberty, to the will and commands of God, dictating to man his duty. Or it may be described thus :

HOLINESS is that principle of the new and spiritual life from God, by which our actions are intentionally directed to produce good towards all the objects of our rational and free agency in heaven and earth.

The objects of our free and rational agency are God, the Father, Son, and holy Spirit ; ourselves, our fellow-christians, and all mankind.

Holiness towards God consists in the lively conception of true ideas of his natural and moral perfections—in an ardent affection to him as the supreme good—a serious sense and awe of his power, holiness, and majesty—a trust in his sincerity and faithful promises—an obedience to the will of his providence and the commands of his law—a lively communion with him in his love and grace.

Holiness

Holiness towards Christ is a realizing and vivid perception of his grandeur, fulness, and power, to save, as mediator—in an ardent love to him as our beautiful and generous redeemer—in obedience to his will as our Lord and master—in learning of him as our wise teacher—in imitation of his lovely example in his temper and actions—and in a daily, humble dependence on him as our intercessor and advocate before the throne of God.

HOLINESS towards the holy Spirit consists in a lively sense of the excellence and glory of his person and operations, in an ardent desire to feel his daily influences, and be filled with his graces as a spirit of adoption, liberty, love, and joy.

HOLINESS towards ourselves consists in consideration, and self-furniture—in humility, and sober self-valuation—in meekness, and wise self-vindication—in contentment, or self-possession—in prudence, or self-management—and in fortitude and constancy, or self-consistency of character and conduct—in the sobriety and government of the body as well as the mind; that is to say, bodily temperance in meats and drinks—chastity, or bodily continence—diligence, or bodily employment—mortification, or bodily subjection to reason and religion; and all attended with self-advancement, or a heavenly mind and life.

HOLINESS towards our fellow-christians and all mankind, includes love to man, justice and universal equity, gratitude, courtesy and peaceableness, truth and honesty, mercy and beneficence, or a delight in doing good to the whole world, but especially to the household of faith—forgiveness of injuries, and doing good to our enemies, which is the noble and distinguishing temper of a true christian.

We will now give what I would stile]

A scriptural VIEW of EVANGELICAL HOLINESS and
SOCIAL VIRTUE.

Holiness with regard to God, the Father, Son, and holy Spirit.

A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. I will give you a heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and ye shall return to me with your whole heart. Jer. xxiv. 7. I will put my spirit within you, If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. 2 Cor. v. 17. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Eph. iv. 23. Partakers of the divine nature. 2 Pet. i. 4. Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Phil. ii. 5. The LORD thy GOD will circumcise thy heart, that thou mayst love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live. Deut. xxx. 6. To be spiritually minded

minded his life and peace. Rom. viii. 6. Faith
 is the existence, ground, and confident expecta-
 tion of blessings hoped for, and the demonstra-
 tion, evidence, and keen conviction of invisible
 transactions; the evidence of an invisible God
 and redeemer, ever present to sustain, animate,
 bless, and beautify the mind. Heb. xi. 1. * We
 walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Cor. v. 7. Add
 to patience godliness. Thou shalt love the
 LORD thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and
 mind, and strength. Matth. xxii. This is life
 eternal, to know thee the only true God and
 Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. John xvii. 3.
 Fear God, and keep his commandments: for
 this is the whole wisdom, duty, and happiness
 of man. Ecc. xii. 13. The fear of God is the
 beginning of knowledge and wisdom. Prov. i. 7.
 Trust in the Lord with all thy heart: and lean
 not to thine understanding. Prov. iii. 5. That
 your faith and hope might be in God. 1 Pet. i. 21.
 Have faith in God. Mark xi. 22. Live no longer
 to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 1 Pet.
 iv. 2. Our fellowship is with the father, and with
 his son Jesus Christ. 1 John i. 3. In all thy
 ways acknowledge him. Prov. iii. 6. Believe
 in the LORD your God, so shall ye prosper.
 2 Chron. xx. 20. Repentance towards God.

Acts

* We have endeavoured to express something of the energy of the original Greek in this translation and paraphrase.

Acts xx. 21. Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Luke iv. 8. God is a spirit : and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth, John iv. 24. Honour the Lord with thy substance. Prov. iii. 9. Delight thyself in the Lord. Psal. xxxviii. 4. Be imitators of God as beloved children. Eph. v. 1. Rejoice in the Lord always. Philip. iii. 4. We joy in God. Rom. v. 2. Be faithful to death. Rev. ii. 10. Trust in him at all times. Ps. lxii. 8. Enoch walked with God. Gen. v. 22. Noah walked with God. vi. 9. The grace of God teacheth us to live godly. Titus ii. 11, 12. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 1 Cor. x. 31. Glorify God with your bodies, and your spirits, which are his. 1 Cor. vi.

FAITH in CHRIST, as our great mediator, is an essential branch of vital holiness. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Acts xvi. 31. He that believeth not, shall be damned. Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. John iii. 16. vi. 47. He that believeth not is condemned already. He that believeth not the son shall not see life : but the WRATH of GOD abideth on him. John iii. 18, 36. Lovest thou me? John xxi. 17. Whom having not seen, ye love. 1 Pet. i. 8. If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed till

till the Lord shall come. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Ye are my disciples, if ye do whatsoever I command you. John. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly. Matth. xi. 29. I have given you an example. John xiii. 15. Leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Come to God by him: he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Heb. vii. 25.

WHITHER CAN I FLEE FROM THY SPIRIT ?
 Pf. cxxxix. Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, Eph. iv. 30. He will give the holy Spirit to them that ask him. Luke. They being sent forth by the holy Spirit. Acts xiii. 4. The Spirit of God dwells in you. Rom. viii. 9. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds or lusts of the body, ye shall live. Rom. viii. 11. Ye are led (agontai, powerfully actuated) by the Spirit. Ver. 14. The love of the Spirit. Rom. xv. 30. Your body is the temple of the holy Spirit. 1 Cor. vi. 19. Ye all drink into one Spirit. 1 Cor. xii. 13. I will pray with the Spirit, and with understanding. 1 Cor. xiv. I will sing with the Spirit, and with understanding. Ver. 15. By the grace of God, I am what I am. 1 Cor. xv. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. Gal. v. 22. Live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit. Ver. 25. BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. Eph. v. 18. Praying

with all prayer in the Spirit. Eph. vi. 18. Worship God in the Spirit. Philip. iii. 3. Quench not the Spirit. 1 Thes. v. 19. Keep the form, the lively description or delineation of sound words by the holy Spirit. 2 Tim. i. 14, 15. Obey the truth through the Spirit, 1 Pet. i. 22. Praying in or by the holy Spirit. Jude, ver. 20. Hear what the Spirit sayeth to the churches. This command is repeated seven times. Rev. ii. 3. Grace and peace from the seven Spirits which are before his throne. Rev. i. 4. Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne. Rev. iv. 5. Seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God. Rev. v. 6. The Spirit of life from God. Rev. xii. 11. I will give to him that is thirsty, of the fountain of the water of life freely. Rev. xxi. 6. A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the lamb. Rev. xxii. 1.

CONSIDERATION and self-furniture.—Consider your ways, consider your ways. Hag. i. 5, 7. I thought on my ways. Ps. cxix. 59. Renewed in knowledge. Colos. iii. 10. Humility—Be not wise in your own conceit, Rom. xii. Less than least. Eph. iii. 8. Be not proud. Jer. xiii. 15. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. 1 Pet. iii. Be content with such things as ye have. Heb. xiii. Godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Tim. vi. My servant shall deal prudently. Isai. Be
wise

wife as serpents, and harmless as doves. *Matth.*
 Quit you like men: be strong. *1 Cor. xvi.* Be
 strong in the Lord. *Eph. vi.* Take heed lest
 your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and
 drunkenness. *Luke xxi. 34.* Be temperate in all
 things. *1 Cor. ix.* Be not drunk with wine. *Eph.*
v. 18. He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor
 man. *Prov. xxi. 17.* The drunkard and the
 glutton shall come to poverty. *xxiii. 21.* Be
 sober, grave, temperate. *Titus ii. 2, 6.* Thou
 shalt not commit adultery. *Exod. xx. 14.* No
 unclean person hath any inheritance in the king-
 dom of God. *Eph. 5, 6.* I saw a young man
 void of understanding. See the alarming picture,
Prov. vii. 7—12. Fornication, and all unclean-
 ness, let it not be once named amongst you, as
 becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish
 talking, or lewd turns, or obscene jesting, which
 are by no means agreeable. *Eph. v. 3, 4.* The
 soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing,
 but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat,
Prov. xiii. 4. She (i. e. the virtuous woman)
 looketh well to the ways of her household, and
 eateth not the bread of idleness—her works
 praise her in the gates—strength and honour are
 her cloathing. *Prov. xxxi. 27, 28.* Mortify, there-
 fore, fornication, uncleanness, pathetic wishes,
 vicious inclinations, or impure taste, and in-
 satiable desire, which is idolatry. *Colos. iii. 5.*
 I keep

I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection. 1 Cor. ix. 27. Our conversation is in heaven. Philip. iii. 20. They desire a better country. Heb. xi.—We are all sensible of the happy frame and temper a person may be put into, by a bright and GOOD PROSPECT of self-advancement to any eminent post and honourable station in temporal life : how much more should it give ease to our minds, and greatness and dignity to our spirits, to think of our vast advancement to liberty and dominion in the eternal empire of God !

HOLINESS and SOCIAL VIRTUE towards all mankind, and especially to the church of God.—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Matth. xxii. 39. Fulfil ye the royal law, (nomon basilikon) thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Jam. ii. 8.—The most beautiful description of the social grace of christian love that ever was dictated by God, and written by the inspired pen of the greatest apostle, we have in 1 Cor. xiii. Love is of great extent of mind, and an enlarged generous temper ; and is easy, gentle, full of benignity, and kind dispositions : it has no invidious affection : it vaunteth not with a vain ambitious desire to be the greatest, and to shine with an ostentatious glare in the public eye : it is not swelled with pride at the applause of others : it doth not proudly act out of character,

ter, with a stiff and disdainful air, and insolent haughtiness towards others : it seeketh not self-pleasing and SELF-INTEREST only, to the injury of others : it is not bitterly nor outrageously provoked : it does not attentively think evil of others ; nor suppose, apprehend, or judge others to be evil ; it does not reason out, or dig up evil and mischief concerning other persons ; nor does it impute evil hastily to others, nor set it down to their account, and charge it home upon their characters without full evidence : it rejoiceth not in iniquity : it is not glad, it feels no pleasure in the vile conduct of others, but is really grieved and sorry at the bad conduct of foolish and wicked professors of the gospel : it rejoiceth in the truth of the gospel, and in all godly sincerity of heart, and in all true conversion of souls to Christ : it covers all lamented blemishes in our fellow-christians, and hath a joyful voice to publish right and good things of every worthy believer in the world : it believeth the best of every upright and amiable character in the church of Christ : it hopeth the best of all those who, in the main, evince themselves to be the true children of God. Love, true evangelical love, flowing from a divine life, nature, and principle, never faileth, but is immortal as our existence, and eternal as the nature, duration, and life of God.—I will add a few more of the scriptural beauties

beauties of christian love ; viz. Be kindly affectionate one to another, (philostorgoi) have a strong natural tenderness, such as those animals who have the most violent natural affection to their young. Rom. xii. 10. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another. xiii. 8. Be unanimous, sympathizing, compassionate, full of bowels : be courteous, (philophrones) of a friendly loving mind. 1 Pet. iii. 8. Above all things have fervent love. 1 Pet. iv. 8. Unfeigned love—with a pure heart, fervently. 1 Pet. i. 22. Unity in the spirit in the bond of peace. One body ; one spirit ; one hope ; one Lord ; one faith ; one God ; one baptism :—here are seven ones, or unities. Eph. iv. 3. One heart, and one soul. Acts iv. 32. Joined all in one soul, (sumpuchoi) Phil. ii. 1, 2. Blessed are the merciful. Matth. v. 7. Put on bowels of mercies. Colos. iii. 12. Be not weary in well doing. Let us do good to all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith. Gal. 9, 10. If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you. If ye forgive not men, neither will your heavenly father forgive you. Matth. vi. 14, 15. Peter said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ? till seven times ? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times ; but until SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN. Matth. xviii. 21, 22.

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Be merciful, as your father is merciful. Do good, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great: ye shall be the children of the highest. If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have you? for sinners also love those that love them. WHAT DO YE MORE THAN OTHERS? Luke vi. 27—36. Matth. v. 47. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged. Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. Luke vi. 37, 38. Be not overcome of evil: but conquer evil with good. If it be possible, live peaceably with all men. Avenge not yourselves. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Rom. xii. 17—21. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. Matth. v. 43, 44. I have not suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul. Job xxxi. 29, 30. Do JUSTLY, love mercy. Micah vi. 8. Render to all their dues: honour to whom honour. Rom. xiii. 7. Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye the same to them: for this is the spirit of all the law and the prophets. Matth. vii. 12. This is the GOLDEN RULE and the ROYAL LAW which ought every moment of life to reign over kings and subjects: preachers and people: husbands

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and wives : parents and children : masters and servants : brothers and sisters : friend and friend : and, if obeyed universally, would turn the whole world into the paradise of God !

Putting away LYING, speak every one TRUTH with his neighbour. Eph. iv. 25. In simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom. 2 Cor. i. 12. Let INTEGRITY and uprightness preserve me. Ps. xxv. 21. The devil, when he speaketh a lye, speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of a lye. John viii. 44. Lying lips are an abomination to God : but they that deal truly are his delight. Prov. xii. 22. JESUS says, I am the TRUTH, John xiv. 6. He that speaketh lyes shall not escape. Prov. xix. 5. He that loveth and maketh a lye ; yea, all lyars shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. Rev. xxi. 8. That ye may be SINCERE. Philip. i. 10. Sincerity and truth. 1 Cor. v. 8. Worship God in spirit and truth. John iv. 24. Draw near with a true heart. Heb. x. 22. Servants, be obedient, in SINGLENESS of heart : not men-pleasers, but doing the will of God from the heart. Eph. vi. 5, 6. Be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. 1 Cor. xv. 58. Thine heart is tender. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27. An heart of flesh, i. e. a tender heart, tender apprehensions of God, tender reflections of conscience,
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and susceptible of the tender impressions of God's word and spirit. Be zealous and repent. Rev. iii. 9. It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing. Gal. iv. 18.—Thus we have given you a compendious view of the beauty of vital godliness,* and social virtue, from the pure Scriptures of truth: and what man, that has any sense or honesty, will affirm, that these writings are the invention of good men or bad men, of devils or angels; and not given by Inspiration from the holy and good God!

This glorious and God-breathed book sets before us, to allure our zealous IMITATION, the most lovely EXAMPLES of vital HOLINESS and generous virtue. Here you see Abel offering with

* We have some of the most beautiful delineations of evangelical holiness and social virtue given by our English divines, that ever appeared in the world. The HUMAN, SOCIAL, and DIVINE graces are displayed by the great and good Dr. SAMUEL WRIGHT, in his Great Concern of Human Life. 3d edit. 1733. His Scriptural View of the Human Virtues, 8vo. 1730. And JUSTICE and CHARITY in all their Branches. 8vo. 1732. I say, they are displayed by this SUBLIME WRITER with such DIGNITY of THOUGHT as to make serious, practical religion the most lovely and beautiful of all objects. Dr. JOHN EVANS's Sermons, on the CHRISTIAN TEMPER, 2 vols. 8vo. with the Abridgement by Dr. Stonehouse and his friends, 8vo. pr. 1s. 6d. are above all commendation. Dr. WATTS's Sermons, on Christian Morality, are truly and richly evangelical. The twenty-four Sermons, by the Rev. Mr. JOHN MASON, on the CHRISTIAN MORALS, or Discourses on the Human, Divine, Christian, and Social Graces, 2 vols. 8vo. exhibit fine sense, a most correct and delicate taste, in a nervous, elegant style; and, with a deep sense of serious religion, warming and enlivening at once both the head and the heart of the very ingenious and amiable author.

with FAITH in Christ: Enoch walks with God: Noah moved with the most godly FEAR: Abraham's unbounded obedience, flowing from a most vigorous FAITH: Isaac, a pattern of a most quiet pacific spirit: Jacob is nobly bold to wrestle with his GOD in PRAYER: Joseph, a noble pattern of CHASTITY, and purity of affections: Job, a mirror of PATIENCE: Moses, a striking example of MEEKNESS: Phineas exerts the most daring zeal: Samuel and Obadiah, sweet patterns of the most early PIETY: David flames and soars in DEVOTION: Solomon chuses WISDOM above all things: Josiah shines in TENDERNESS of heart: the three heroes courageously dare the fiery furnace: Daniel abounds in wisdom and FORTITUDE to astonishment: Mary Magdalene * melts into the deepest REPENTANCE: Peter weeps bitterly: John, a mirror of softness and LOVE: Stephen triumphs amidst outrage and blood: Paul rises into all the sublimity of devotion and courage, and unites the zeal of a seraph with the deepest humility, and more than the wisdom of an archangel: but
above

* The ardent PRAYERS of Hannah: the wisdom and understanding of Abigail, adorned with her beautiful countenance and amiable SOFTNESS of MANNERS: the exalted PIETY of Elizabeth: the purity, simplicity, and DIGNITY of the Virgin Mary: with the humble and fervent DEVOTION of the sisters of Lazarus: and the daring FORTITUDE of the holy women, who went early to visit the sepulchre, and manifest their unshaken ATTACHMENT to their divine MASTER and friend:—I say, these beautiful EXAMPLES ought never to be forgotten for one moment; and will be peculiarly useful to christian women in every age of the church.

above all, we have the example of the SON of GOD, in whom we see all divine and human perfections shine out with the most resplendent lustre. In Christ we see the most illustrious behaviour towards his father, towards his friends, towards his enemies, and towards himself; and, in the common course of our saviour's life amidst a most brilliant constellation of eminent virtues, all equally worthy of our most zealous imitation, you cannot but observe THREE graces that shine out with a distinguished lustre as stars of the first magnitude.

1. SUPERIORITY to the whole world, and all its alluring and attractive blandishments. He had a noble contempt of all those pleasures which worldly men pursue with so much ardour, and in which they place their chief joy. Earthly riches and pleasures he despised; carnal honours and preferments he scorned; and all the idols and lusts, which draw men into eternal ruin, he disdained with his whole heart.

2. Astonishing DELIGHT in doing GOOD. 'Twas the incessant labour and joy of his soul to instruct, and cheer, and bless mankind; the sincerity, purity, and fervour of his love to mankind, was the life of his life, and his daily and hourly felicity. Nothing in our world ever equalled his delight, in every moment of his life, to do GOOD.

3. His

3. His delicate DECORUM, DIGNITY, and BEAUTY of conduct: the fitness, the propriety, and consistency of his behaviour and character, are above all praise; yea, above all description or conception. 'Tis really astonishing and delightful to observe what a vast variety of characters our redeemer sustains every moment, with such amazing dignity, fulness, and beauty; so that no one character, name, or relation, intrenches on another, or eclipses the rest.—See Mr. Mason's Sermon on the Imitation of Christ. Vol. 2. p. 121.

This wonderful and delightful book assigns to us the most glorious EMPLOYMENT, in the best GOOD WORKS, all through life, (viz.) to GLORIFY CHRIST with a view to enjoy him for ever.

To glorify Christ is the noblest work of a rational creature: it consists in making his beauty and fulness, his grandeur and power, his illustrious perfections and tenderness, conspicuous in the most vivid and striking manner to mankind, and especially to the church of God. Or, in shorter words,

To glorify Christ is to discover and declare, in the most vivid and conspicuous manner, the illustrious power, fulness, grace, and tenderness of Christ as the God and salvation of a sinner.

We glorify Christ by committing our immortal powers and highest interests into his hands: confessing

nessing our impurity and his holiness, our guilt and his righteousness: loving him above all worlds, as the object of our choicest thoughts and most transcendent esteem: being zealous for the display of his most beautiful perfections, and his glorious gospel: exerting all our talents of reason and grace to proclaim his shining perfections, and to make him owned and loved amongst his redeemed people.

We glorify Christ by walking humbly with him. What does the Lord require of thee, but to walk humbly with thy God. Micah vi. 8. This acknowledges our infinite distance from the grandeur and dignity of Christ; our unworthiness before him, and dependence upon him; the imperfection of our knowledge and goodness; the greatness of our guilt; the impurity of our internal character; and our desert of eternal death.

We glorify Christ when we abound in thankfulness and gratitude to him for his blessings and comforts; this gives him the glory of being the author of our mercies. Thankfulness sets an high value on all the favours and blessings of Christ, as the God of nature, providence, and grace.

We glorify Christ by walking cheerfully before him. This declares to all the world our inward satisfaction and pleasure: this recommends his service

service to mankind as most agreeable to our rational powers, sweet to our affections, promotive of our noblest interest and highest aims of self-advancement in God: it shews to men, angels, and devils, that we do not repent * of engaging in the cause of Christ; that we do not wish we had continued to serve our old master, the prince of hell, rather than Christ; but that we rejoice we have escaped his cruel tyranny, and find eternal liberty, dignity, dominion, and pleasure, in the service of the Son of God. We glorify Christ when we have a noble ambition to do the greatest good in our power, and act to the utmost extent of our abilities, to serve his people, and advance the happiness of the world. It ought to be one of our first thoughts in the morning, What good may I do this day? What good shall I do to the churches of Christ? What shall I do for the good of my family? What good shall we do for our relations? What good shall I do to my enemies, and how shall I overcome evil with good? What shall I do for the more general interest of religion in the world? What good shall I do to the civil society to which I am related? Is there any person, who is able to do the good that lies out of my reach, to whom I may apply for that purpose? What good shall I do to the poor in affliction and want?

* See Dr. Ridgely's Body of Divinity, p. 1-3.

want? What shall I do for the interest of God in my own heart and life. *

Thus godlike is the religion of Jesus: it is like its author, the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

The most noble and divine MOTIVES, addressed to the best SPRINGS of action in the soul, are to be found in the holy Scriptures, far beyond all the SANCTIONS of the LAW of NATURE. †

MOTIVES are considerations of GOOD and EVIL, proposed to the mind, to excite its eager pursuit of the one, and its rapid flight from the other, with the utmost ardour and speed.

You

* This was Dr. Cotton Mather's practice, at Boston, in New-England, for forty years together. He died, Feb. 13, 1728.—See the Abridgment of his Life, by Dr. Jennings, 12mo.

† The SANCTIONS of the LAW of NATURE, or the motives which enforce that law on the reason and conscience of mankind, are either present or future.

The PRESENT SANCTION of REWARDS, addressing our hopes, consist in the peace and approbation of a man's own mind—in the satisfaction and pleasure arising from a just self-approbation—in health of body and fine spirits—esteem and honour amongst men—the favour and friendship of wise and worthy men—prosperity and success in our outward affairs—the auspicious smiles and kind concurrence of divine providence—with the hopes of farther favours, honours, and pleasures in life; all which are the usual rewards of virtue.

On the other hand; as to PUNISHMENTS, the PRESENT SANCTIONS of the law of nature addressing our fears, in case of MORAL EVIL, include the terrible reverse of the above. (viz.) pungent horrors of mind, with shame, blushes, and self-contempt: dissatisfaction arising from self-contempt and stings of conscience, with bitter remorse and foreboding horrors: sickness of body, painful diseases, and bad spirits: contempt
and

You see in this divine book all the passions and springs of motion addressed with the most vivid fire, force, and tenderness.

Fear of evil, and horror at the loss of all good, are touched by the tremendous threatenings of God.—Hope of good, yea, a lively hope of all good, is excited by the promises, the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel. Gratitude is touched into the highest tone, by a sense of the intense and generous love of Christ to us, who was an utter stranger to us, and yet he loved us—we were in the meanest state, and yet he loved us—we were of the most worthless characters, and yet he loved us—yea, we were vile, detestable, and horrid characters, and yet he loved us—yea, farther, and more horrid still, we were bitter enemies to God, and yet he loved us. If such generous and unparalled love will not touch the springs of gratitude,

and disgrace amongst mankind : the aversion and disdain of wise and honest men : vexations and losses in outward affairs : a despair of the kind concurrence of divine providence, and an expectation of the frowns of God, with a dread of greater evils and worse events, as the natural and moral consequences of a bad heart and profligate manners before God and mankind ; with many more horrible calamities which do usually attend on vice ; and many of them, without fail, pursue the sinner.

THE FUTURE SANCTIONS of the law of nature, are the rewards and punishments reserved in an after state.—See GROVE'S Explanation and Proof of the Law of Nature. Moral Philos. vol. 2.

N. B. These are fine sentiments, and grounded in reason, justice, and truth : but, alas ! how weak and inefficacious are all the sanctions of the light and law of nature, when compared with the bright and powerful motives of DIVINE REVELATION !

gratitude, we have no life of grace in us.—Here are motives addressed to ambition, glory, shame, interest, and pleasure, in the most tender and prudent manner, and such as will not fail to reach the great end, if we have the heart, the life, and spirit of true christians. But these glorious and sublime motives must be displayed more at large in another part of this work.

This glorious volume of GOD furnishes the strongest CORDIALS and most generous SUPPORTS under all the TROUBLES of life, (viz.) poverty, sickness, the loss of friends, and the malice of enemies,

GOD supplies his worst enemies with good, and will he starve his best friends in our world? He employs all his angels to wait on the least christian, and will he not supply his real wants? He has given a thousand assurances of temporal blessings, and will he withhold those blessings till time with us shall be no longer? He has supplied all his people, in all past ages, for thousands of years: he cloaths his people with a divine and infinite righteousness: he feeds his people with the flesh and blood of his son, which is meat and drink indeed: he has given the soul, the immortal soul of his son for our redemption: he makes our bodies the temples of the holy Spirit: from all eternity he has put our persons, with our grace and glory, into the hands of Christ: he

will give us a city paved with gold, and gates made of solid pearls : he has settled on us a most glorious and eternal kingdom, an unbounded empire : he has saved us already from the powers of darkness and eternal fire : he has given us a rich experience of his boundless goodness in this life : we have tasted the infinite sweetness and good that is in Christ Jesus, and the present intimations of his love : he speaks out his friendly cautions, FEAR NOT, above forty times : his voice in his promises is clear, tender, warm, and pathetic : he gives us a clear prospect of eternal life : and God has given himself to us, in his glorious existence and perfections, without reserve, all confirmed with his solemn oath ; and will he deny us temporal supplies ?

CONSOLATIONS against the TERRORS of DEATH, are most gloriously furnished by divine revelation.

Death is the king of terrors, and the terror of kings : 'tis the most terrible of all terribles. Wherever this horrid monster comes he stagnates the movements of the blood—drives the breath out of the lungs—destroys all sensation in the nerves—puts an entire stop to all voluntary motion—tears the soul and body asunder—commands the man to leave the world, and all his friends and sweetest enjoyments—turns the body to rottenness and ashes—summons the soul to appear

appear before the great God in an **invisible** world—declares the good or bad qualities of the heart—seals up the character of all men—and bids us enter into a vast eternity, with the exercise of all our thinking powers, in a new way of perception and sensation.

CONSOLATION is the relief of the mind under any trouble or perplexity, by the presence and taste of a **GOOD** which shall outbalance all the **EVILS** we feel or fear.

The gospel opens to our view the most glorious considerations to support the soul in the approaches and prospects of death.

Revelation teaches us to think often of death in every point of view—to expect death every day, yea, every hour; and that the time and manner of our death are entirely in the hands of God every moment. It commands us to take off our affections from the fond love of the spirit, pleasures, and manners of the world; it teaches us powerfully to hate and forsake all sin, and pursue the life and power of godliness; and allures and persuades us to repose ourselves on God's fatherly providence every hour.

This immortal book assures us that God will be with us, by his **SPIRIT** and **PRESENCE**, in our most grievous agonies and **struggles** with death: he will come into the soul and abide with us by
a presence

a presence of power to support, by a presence of goodness to supply, and a presence of light and love to cheer the heart, which no agonies can withstand, no terrors can vanquish, and which will finally triumph over all opposition.

In the approaches of death, and in our conflicts with that LAST ENEMY, GOD will give us the light of his countenance, as a kind and GRACIOUS FATHER : he will impress on our hearts a sense of the excellent honour he has done us in the great act of ADOPTION, which transcends all the other acts of sovereign grace : and if he shall be pleased to infuse into our souls the spirit of adoption in the agonies of death, we shall then realize the hand of a father, and say, I am dying at my father's command ; I die by my father's hand, and under the favour of his propitious smiles and approbation. *

This precious book throws open before our eyes the SUFFERINGS and DEATH of Christ, and the infinite worth and efficacy of his blood, as a rich consolation to our souls in the approaches and agonies of death. The true christian may say, " Christ, by dying, has taken away the sting of death ; he has exhausted the curse, dissolved my obligation to punishment, has altered the property and changed the face of death, so that he

* The last words Dr. Gill spoke, were, " Oh, my father ! my father ! " He died Oct. 14, 1771, aged 73.—See his Life in the Collection of Sermons and Tracts, vol. 1. 4to. 1773.

he cannot appear as the horrible king of terrors, but is changed into a messenger of peace to fetch me home to my father's house, and the bosom of God."

The gospel shews us Christ lying DEAD in his GRAVE to comfort us against the fears of death. See that dead body in that tomb: Whose is it? See his hands, his feet, his head, his side! How is that body drained of blood and bereft of life! and for what end? O! says Dr. Owen, he is lovely in his death; yea, therein, most lovely to sinners: never more glorious and desirable, than when he came broken, and dead from the cross: then he had carried all our sins out of the sight of divine justice: then had he made peace and reconciliation for us: then had he procured life and immortality for us.—See his admirable book on Communion with God. 1657. p. 86.

See the Lord Jesus in his RESURRECTION and absolute VICTORY over death and the grave. This is a delightful sight to a dying believer; and this view the gospel affords to every true christian in the world. See the angel descends from heaven in flames of fire; his countenance blazes like lightening; he rolls back the ponderous stone, and, in dazzling glory, he sits upon it, flashing fire and terror on the Roman guards: they become as dead men: they are not worthy to see the Lord arise. See him coming out of his

grave, like a mighty conqueror, never more to die ; but always to triumph over Satan, death, and sin. Let the dying christian fix his eye on this rising God, and insult death : O ! tyrant, where is thy sting ! O ! grave, where is thy victory !

This volume of Inspiration shews us the ASCENSION of JESUS into heaven with amazing triumph, and sitting down, surrounded with honour, at God's right hand. O ! christian, in a few hours, perhaps in a few moments, thou wilt be with him where he is, to behold his glory, and to share in the joys of his triumphs over death : thou wilt look down on thy pale dead body, and smile to find thy soul released, and that death has done his worst to thy mortal frame.

This glorious and immortal book shews to the dying christian, in a strong point of light, the VITAL UNION between CHRIST and his SOUL, as an invincible and victorious CONSOLATION. O ! believer, Christ is thy life ; and, because he lives, thou shalt live also : his flesh is meat indeed : his blood is drink indeed : and thou hast eat his flesh and drank his blood by faith ; therefore Christ lives in thee, and thou livest in Christ. His life secures eternal life to thy soul ; and thou mayst defy death, and bid him do his worst ; he can never touch thy nobler part ; thy life from Christ is eternal as the duration of God himself ;
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the first fruits of heaven are thine now.—See Dr. Watts on the First Fruits of Heaven, in his World to come. 8vo.

The gospel assures us, that death shall totally deliver us from all TEMPORAL EVILS. What a confluence of temporal evils do we meet with? Weariness, and sickness, and pains of the body—crosses and losses in business—the malice and slander of wicked men—the haughty contempt of the proud—the bitter words of the angry and quarrelsome—the baseness, deceit, and treachery of pretended friends; and the folly and fickleness of real ones—with the scandalous falls of the preachers of the gospel—the vile apostacy of splendid professors, and the horrible crimes that break out in their lives and conversation. All these, with a thousand other troubles, vex the true christian's soul, and excite him to wish for that world of blessedness, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

Death will deliver us from all the sad IMPERFECTIONS of OUR INTERNAL CHARACTER, and free us from the power, deceit, and enmity of INDWELLING SIN; and this would make a christian not only willing, but ardently desirous to die. We all find a law of sin and death working within us: a powerful, efficacious principle, or mighty spring of corrupt and guilty action. We find that our heart is the seat or subject

of the law of sin; and that the heart, as possessed by sin, is deeply deceitful, and awfully unsearchable by man. That we are the subject of inveterate enmity against God: an enmity that admits of no peace with God, or rest in him: an enmity which strikes at the existence, attributes, and happiness of God; and which discovers itself by aversion to him, and a propensity to all sin, with an opposition to all that is in God, attended with a lusting or most violent and insatiable desire after all sorts of evil, surprising the soul into lust, and having an eagerness to close with every kind of temptation: acting with the deepest deceit, hiding of its ends and ultimate design, which is to draw the soul intirely off from God, and bring us into eternal death: poisoning and polluting the imagination, entangling and enflaming the affections, and making violent attempts, by its deceit, to bring the will and passions to consent to sin; which is, in Scripture, stiled the conception of sin. James i. 15. When LUST hath CONCEIVED, it bringeth forth SIN; and SIN, when it finished, bringeth forth DEATH. Every man is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. James i. 14, 15. But the moment we die, we are released from all the force, deceit, and enmity of this infinitely dreadful evil, indwelling sin,* and feel ourselves holy and

* See Dr. OWEN's incomparable book on INDWELLING SIN, new edit. 12mo. recommended by six London divings. 1774.—Sold by Keith.

and happy to eternity : which leads us to observe, that

This revelation discovers the HAPPY STATE of our souls from the MOMENT of our DEATH. The Scriptures despise and scorn the absurd notion of the sleep or annihilation of the soul, at the death of the body : they assure us, that the moment we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord. 2 Cor. v. 8. And that to depart and be with Christ, is far better, (*pollo gar mallon kreisson*, better beyond expression, transcendently better.) Philip. i. 23. This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. Luke xxiii. 43. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, (*aparti*) immediately, or henceforth, they are blessed. Rev. xiv. 13. The spirits of just men made perfect. Heb. xii. 23. Perfect in light, without any darkness : perfect in knowledge, without ignorance : perfect in holiness, without sin : perfect in joy, without sorrow : perfect blessedness, without the least misery ! What a flood of life, light, and beauty will pour in upon our ravished souls in a moment ! and how happy shall we feel ourselves, in the twinkling of an eye, when we have parted with this clod of polluted clay, and commence burning seraphs before the throne of God !

This divine book opens to our view the GLO-
RIOUS RESURRECTION of the body, and the rap-

turous meeting of soul and body at that happy
 hour when God shall fulfil his promises. Thy dead
 men shall live. *Isai. xxvi. 19.* They that be wise
 shall shine as the firmament; and as the stars for
 ever and ever. *Dan. xii. 3.* I will redeem them
 from death. O! death, I will be thy plagues;
 O! grave, I will be thy destruction, *Hos. xiii.*
14. Then shall the righteous shine as the sun
 in the kingdom of their father. *Matth. xiii. 43.*
 They shall be like the angels which are in heaven,
Mark xii. 25. There is one glory of the sun,
 and another glory of the moon, and another
 glory of the stars; for one star differs from
 another star in glory: so also is the resurrection
 of the dead: it is sown in corruption, it is raised
 in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is
 raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised
 in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised
 a spiritual body: the last Adam is an enlivening
 spirit, the first is of the earth, earthy: the second
 man is the Lord from heaven: as we have borne
 the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the
 image of the heavenly: in a moment the trumpet
 shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incor-
 ruptible: for this corruptible must put on incor-
 ruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality:
 then shall be verified that saying, DEATH IS SWAL-
 LOWED UP IN VICTORY. O death, where is thy
 sting! O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks

be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ; therefore let us be steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

You see the TERRORS and GLORY of the RESURRECTION of the DEAD, and the LAST JUDGMENT, set in the strongest light and evidence. You do, as it were, hear the last trumpet resound: you see the judge appear: angels blaze like millions of flames: the dead arise: the world is all on fire: the heavens pass away with a great noise: the elements melt with fervent heat: the books are thrown open: eternity is all disclosed to view: the criminals stand at the bar: all the private and public wrongs of impenitent sinners are laid bare before the whole attentive world of saints and angels: you see the judge, with all the blazing glory of a God, outshining ten thousand suns, riding on the clouds of heaven, and those clouds illuminated by gold and scarlet sun-beams: himself an object of the highest wonder and terror, wearing on his head many crowns, brighter than all the starry heavens united in one grand constellation: he comes to judge the whole world of souls and devils: he comes to give the grandest blessings, and inflict eternal deaths: he comes to be admired and adored by all the redeemed and
saved

saved sinners, who now see the most grand, new, and beautiful objects before their eyes: they see their saviour at the head of more than a thousand millions of saved sinners, who were all sorts of characters in their state of nature and sin: they see the most stubborn rebels bowed in their wills to God—filthy wretches washed white in blood—destitute souls all cloathed in one divine righteousness; having all fought their way to heaven, through armies of devils and seas of blood, and the fiercest opposition: we shall then see how the most dark and adverse providences have all worked together for good: afflictions as bitter as wormwood, and dark as midnight and hell, all uniting to urge us forward into the performance of nobler actions, brighter graces, and good works; and into the bosom of Christ in heaven itself.

You see, in the light of divine revelation, how heaven is richly filled out of this hell on earth: and our hell on earth replenishes the vast expanse of heaven with ten thousand times ten thousand souls, attracted from sin to holiness, from misery to happiness, from impotence to divine activity, from filthy vile bodies, and devilish tempers, into the beautiful resemblance of the perfections of God.

But we must conclude this Contemplation with observing, that this astonishing book discovers,
in

in the most clear and vivid light, the two eternal worlds of heaven and hell. We see heaven to be a state of light, without darkness; of holiness, without sin; of joy, without sorrow. 'Tis the perfection of the intellectual, moral, social, and divine life: the eternal repose and delight of the happy soul in the perfect love and blessedness of God.

This awful and sublime book sets before us the eternity and extremity of the terrors of hell: we see, in the light of this tremendous volume, the final state of all wicked souls and damned angels: you see here the final triumphs of holiness over sin, of justice over unrighteousness, of virtue over vice, of wisdom over the craft of men and devils, and of the absolute, independent, and eternal dominion of God over the madness, rebellion, and treason of men and devils: here you see that sin is an infinite evil, as it strikes at all possible and infinite good, exposes to an infinite loss, and fixes a stain in the soul of a sinner through an infinite duration!

Now, what book but this could ever give us such astonishing discoveries of the two eternal worlds! What book but this could ever shew us millions of happy saints saved by one, redeeming God; and millions of miserable sinners deceived, cheated, bewitched, and damned by one devil: millions of poor feeble bodies, made up

of dust and ashes, raised to life and immortal glory; and millions of ugly, putrid carcases raised to shame, contempt, and eternal deformity; ten thousand times ten thousand souls made the reflecting mirrours of the ugly, detestable devil; and millions of holy souls outshining the sun in the kingdom of their father, and made reflecting mirrours of the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person and perfections for ever and ever.

REC O L L E C T I O N.

And now, my reader, let us review the force of this argument, for the divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, drawn from the goodness of the doctrine, or its tendency to remove all the evils we feel or fear, and to promote our truest pleasure and highest happiness in the eternal fruition of God!

We have seen the astonishing advancement which God has made on the glory of his own character, in the work of redemption—the relations of God to our world, and to man, cleared up—the original purity and perfection of human nature—its present depravity, ruin, and impotence—the grand and surprizing burst of grace and mercy to lost man in the gospel—the real, perfect, and infinite satisfaction of Christ—the glory of his righteousness and vital union with him

him—the special aids of his spirit—the dignity and immortality of the soul set in the most striking light by the gospel—the law of nature cleared up, enlarged, and enforced, beyond all that meer reason ever knew—the nature, beauty, and glory of evangelical holiness and social virtue displayed in the most vivid colours—the richest and most alluring examples of holiness proposed for our imitation—the strongest supports under the troubles of life, and the approaches of death—the glory and terror of the general resurrection and the last judgment—with the brightest discoveries of final happiness and misery in heaven and hell.

And now, my reader, lay your hand upon your heart, and honestly ask yourself these questions. Can a book, full of such tremendous and adorable discoveries, be false? Can it be the invention of men? Are these the words of bad or of good men? Is it possible that these should be cunningly-devised fables? No, no; 'tis impossible! this book must be the work of God! it must be the production of his eternal spirit: and if this be a most undoubted and important truth, then what deep regard, what ardent affection, and veneration are due to this precious, this divine and immortal book!

We will, therefore, refer the consideration of the miracles, and the fulfilment of prophecies,

to the second volume; and proceed now to a delightful Contemplation on the holy Dispositions and devout Affections, which are due to the inspired Scriptures of God.

Select BOOKS to be read on the above CONTEMPLATION, concerning the GOODNESS and BEAUTY of the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

1. **THE BEAUTY, CERTAINTY, and PLEASURES of RELIGION** are displayed with peculiar clearness of thought, and elegance of style, by the piqué and ingenious Mr, HENRY GROVE.—See his works in 8vo.

2. On a more evangelical plan, and with greater amplitude of thought, read Dr. SAMUEL STENNETT's two volumes of Sermons on **PERSONAL RELIGION**. These discourses are composed with great perspicuity of thought and expression; and contain such an extensive view of the nature, rise, progress, and perfection of vital religion in the soul, as must necessarily charm every man of true taste and devotion in the world; and, if considered in connection with Dr. EVANS on the **CHRISTIAN TEMPER**, and Dr. DODDRIDGE's **Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul**, will form the brightest scheme of practical religion.

A
CONTEMPLATION
ON THE
DISPOSITIONS AND AFFECTIONS
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HOLY SCRIPTURES

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A CONTEMPLATION
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HOLY SCRIPTURES.

ADMIRATION and VENERATION are due to the BOOK of GOD, on ACCOUNT of its NEWNESS and awful GRANDEUR.—VITAL FAITH in the TRUTH of the BIBLE.—ESTEEM for the SCRIPTURES, as most excellent in themselves.—Ardent DESIRE after the KNOWLEDGE of them, and the POSSESSION of the infinite GOOD contained in the PROMISES.—BENEVOLENCE, or GOOD WILL is due to this sacred BOOK in the highest EXERTION.—GRATITUDE to GOD for a divine REVELATION; and to the SON of GOD for sealing this precious VOLUME with his BLOOD; and to the HOLY SPIRIT for his INSPIRATION of the PROPHETS and APOSTLES.—GRATITUDE to DIVINE PROVIDENCE that we have a BIBLE perfected, preserved, translated, and now expounded by the best of our BRITISH DIVINES.—DELIGHT in the SCRIPTURES, as the richest DISCOVERY of the supreme GOOD,
CHRIST.

CHRIST JESUS.—HOPE, a lively vigorous HOPE in the exceeding great and precious PROMISES and BLESSINGS revealed in the SCRIPTURE.—SUBJECTION and entire OBEEDIENCE of SOUL and CONSCIENCE to the whole WILL of GOD in SCRIPTURE.—ZEAL for the HONOUR and PROPAGATION of the GOSPEL at home and abroad.

I. **A**DMIRATION and veneration are due to the sacred Scriptures of God! Admiration is a pleasing emotion of the soul, arising from the perception of any object which is new and agreeable. Veneration arises from an object, grand, awful, and sublime.—Now, my dear readers, what can be so new and agreeable to our souls as to see the glorious discoveries of the nature, perfections, and thoughts of God, displayed before our ravished souls: to see ten thousand new and strange ideas, concerning objects before time, in time, and after time; objects which are quite beyond the verge of the human understanding, and out of the province of reason to explore. 'Tis astonishing goodness in God to give creatures a divine revelation, who had abused the light of nature in the works of creation, and who had so horribly violated the law of nature within us. 'Tis wonderful condescension in God to give us a superior light to direct us to happiness, when we had played the fool

fool with the powers of reason and conscience. Surely we ought to tremble at the profusion of divine goodness, and, with the deepest reverence and adoration, receive this immortal book as from the immediate bosom and hand of God.

Great God of heaven and earth ! what do we owe thee for a divine revelation ! what do we not owe thee ! We owe thee more than ten thousand worlds can pay. We are overpowered, we are delightfully oppressed with the exceeding riches of thy grace, we are lost in wonder, we are overwhelmed with veneration and holy awe of thy majesty and mercy to creatures so unworthy and provoking, so guilty and abominable ; we tremble at the profusions of thy goodness, and we receive the infinite blessing of a divine revelation, with a mixture of grateful confusion and sacred astonishment, being conscious of our utter unworthiness of such an unspeakable favour of God to man.

II. VITAL FAITH in the TRUTH of this REVELATION is another disposition of soul due to the holy Scriptures. Faith is the confident expectation of blessings desired, and the convincing evidence of invisible transactions. Heb. xi. 1. Faith is a firm and steadfast assent of the understanding to the testimony of God in his word ; and an hearty consent of the will to the goodness
and

and sweetness, the fitness and beauty, of that testimony. It is my own real sentiment, that no demonstration in geometry can be more certain to the mind of a mathematician than the testimony of God is to the mind of a christian. Yea, I will advance a step farther, and dare to affirm, that God, speaking in his word, gives greater satisfaction to a wise and sound believer than any geometrical truth could ever give even to the mind of a NEWTON : and my reason for it is this, The mind of a serious and honest christian, being enlightened and rectified by divine grace, is better fitted to discern and receive the grand truths of revelation than the mind of a mathematician is to discern all the steps of a laborious demonstration in geometry : it requires great strength of understanding and memory to grasp ten or twelve ideas at once, and to discern the agreement of those ideas with each other, so as to draw a genuine and just conclusion from the whole, that shall be as certain to the mind as the very first principle with which you set out : every man that has exercised himself in EUCLID'S ELEMENTS knows this to be fact. But a christian has a shorter and a clearer road to divine truth : his first business is to sit down with a calm and honest mind, and with this simple and solid axiom in his understanding, " WHATEVER GOD SAYS, MUST BE TRUE." He is then to consider

the evidence of the divine Inspiration, now proposed to him, arising from the wonderful goodness of the doctrine, and its suitability to all the wants and wishes of an IMMORTAL SOUL. He then must freely cry out, " This is the voice of God, and not of man." GOD has said it, and I will believe it. Lord, I do believe this book as copied from thy heart : O ! GOD of truth, I see its goodness ; I love its beauty ; and a whole world of infidels shall not weaken my assent, or drive me from the rock of my salvation. This leads us naturally to another sacred disposition of the soul towards the holy Scriptures.

III. ESTEEM for the word of GOD, as most excellent in itself, and worthy of the highest regard, on account of its intrinsic dignity and glory.

Let us never forget, that the Scriptures are copied from the eternal nature and heart of GOD. Whatever can excite esteem towards an object is to be found in the holy Scriptures—the wisdom and sublimity of the discoveries in this blessed book—the holiness of its laws—the goodness and grace contained in the exceeding great and precious promises—the infallible truth of the historical narrations—the striking manner of drawing characters—the beauty and alluring virtue of the best examples, with the fulfilment of all the prophecies, and the infallible assurance

of the eternal salvation of all who fly to Christ by faith. These excellencies should produce and cherish in us the highest esteem for this glorious and godlike book : and if we farther observe how abundantly the Scriptures are stocked with the most lively images and striking figures, which contain the highest beauties and express the passions in the most moving language, surely we must say this book is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely !

IV. DESIRE after the true knowledge of the SENSE of Scripture, and ardent prayer for the possession of the infinite good contained in the PROMISES, constitute another disposition of the true christian. What will it avail to give my assent to the divine Inspiration of the Scriptures, if I have no clear and saving knowledge of the meaning of this revelation, and no enjoyment of its blessings !

True grace in the heart of a christian will prompt him to search into the genuine sense of every part of the word of God, especially the law and gospel, and the glorious predictions of the old and new Testament ; * and with equal ardour he will desire to possess a large measure of the blessings contained in the promises ; which are requisite to refine and ennoble our natures, to illuminate our understandings, to regulate our wills,

* Rules for understanding the Scriptures will be given in Vol. II.

wills, to pacify our consciences, to purge our passions, and to raise us by degrees into all the dignity, perfection, and happiness, that an immortal soul can enjoy to eternity in the presence of God.

The promises are exceeding great and precious, in every point of view ; whether we consider the greatness and variety of the blessings contained in them—the manner in which they are expressed by the great and condescending God—the certainty of their fulfilment to all true believers—and the happy effects and consequences of them in the souls of all real christians in the world.*

Every day we want a promise of an INTEREST in a covenant God, to give us his love, his vital presence, his powerful protection, and bountiful supply of all our wants : such a promise we have in Heb. viii. 6. I will be to them a God. Every day I want an heart to KNOW God : such a promise we have in Jer. xxiv. 7. I will give them an heart to know me, that I am Jehovah ; and they shall return to me with their whole heart. Every day I want a promise that I shall be enabled to LOVE God : such a promise there is in Deut. xxx. 6. I will circumcise thine heart to love the

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* See a rich and copious collection of the promises, 12mo. by the late Dr. Samuel Clark, of St. Alban's. His introduction is full of admirable sense and wisdom.

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wills, to pacify our consciences, to purge our passions, and to raise us by degrees into all the dignity, perfection, and happiness, that an immortal soul can enjoy to eternity in the presence of God.

The promises are exceeding great and precious, in every point of view; whether we consider the greatness and variety of the blessings contained in them—the manner in which they are expressed by the great and condescending God—the certainty of their fulfilment to all true believers—and the happy effects and consequences of them in the souls of all real christians in the world.*

Every day we want a promise of an INTEREST in a covenant GOD, to give us his love, his vital presence, his powerful protection, and bountiful supply of all our wants: such a promise we have in Heb. viii. 6. I will be to them a God. Every day I want an heart to KNOW GOD: such a promise we have in Jer. xxiv. 7. I will give them an heart to know me, that I am Jehovah; and they shall return to me with their whole heart. Every day I want a promise that I shall be enabled to LOVE GOD: such a promise there is in Deut. xxx. 6. I will circumcise thine heart to love the

LORD

* See a rich and copious collection of the promises, 12mo. by the late Dr. Samuel Clark, of St. Alban's. His introduction is full of admirable sense and wisdom.

LORD thy GOD with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live. Every day I want a promise of the PARDON of all my SINS : such a promise there is in Ps. cxxx. 4. There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared. —See Dr. Owen's admirable and copious discourse on this verse, in his Exposition of the 130th Psalm. 8vo. Sold by Keith. —Note, All those persons who love gospel pardon, with vital holiness, are surely forgiven by GOD ! Every day I want a promise of JUSTIFICATION by the RIGHTEOUSNESS of CHRIST : such a promise there is in 1 Cor. i. 30. Of GOD he is made unto us righteousness. We are made the righteousness of GOD in him. 2 Cor. v. 21. Every day I want a promise of a NEW HEART : such a promise there is in Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will take away the heart of stone, (i. e. a stubborn will) and give you an heart of flesh, i. e. a soft, sensible, warm heart towards GOD and all heavenly objects. Note, A new heart implies new apprehensions of the illustrious power and grace of Christ, his fitness to save, his fulness to satisfy our wishes, and his beauty to endear himself to our souls. It also implies new determinations of the will and choice towards Christ our wisdom, as a prophet to remove our ignorance : our righteousness and redemption, as a priest to
remove

remove our guilt and slavery : sanctification, as our king to subdue our stubbornness, remove our rebellion, and restore the lost image of God's holiness to our souls. Every day I want a promise of victory over sin, and a power over the vile inclinations, the polluted passions, and vicious tastes of my soul : such a promise there is in Micah vii. 19. He will subdue our iniquities. Sin shall not have dominion over you. Rom. vi. 14. Ye, through the spirit, shall mortify, i. e. suppress and weaken the deeds, i. e. the impure emotions of the body ; and thus ye shall live, i. e. a life of sanctification and joy. Rom. viii. 13. Every day I want to live above the spirit and unlawful love of the world : such a promise there is in John xvi. 33. Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me by the cross of Christ. Gal. vi. 14. Every day I want STRENGTH against all the fraud and force of the temptations of the devil : such a promise there is in 1 Cor. x. 13. No temptation hath taken you, but such as is common to man ; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted, and tried, or put to the proof, above that ye are able to bear ; but will, with the temptation, make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations. 2 Pet. ii. 9. The
 God

God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly, (en tachei) in a short time, or very speedily. Rom. xvi. 20. We are not ignorant of his devices. 2 Cor. ii. 11. Ye shall be able to stand against the wiles, (methodeias) the methods of the devil. Eph. vi. 11. Every day I desire to have a promise of WISDOM and PRUDENCE from God, to direct me in every step of my moral and religious conduct : such a promise there is in Jam. i. 5. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not : he does not reproach us for our past foolishness, and numberless imprudencies : he will not cut us to pieces with sharp words ; but will give us wisdom with all the generosity of a God. Every day I want a promise of being the BETTER FOR EVERY THING that befalls me, and of being the WORSE FOR NO EVENT which happens to me in the course of divine providence : such a promise there is in Rom. viii. 28. All things work together for good to them that love God. —See a glorious demonstration of this truth in CHARNOCK ON PROVIDENCE, 8vo. and in Flavel on Providence, 12mo. and in the great and good Fleming on the Fulfilment of the Scriptures, part I. 12mo. and folio ; with Fleming versified, 12mo. pr. 9d. Sold by Keith.—Every day I want a promise of the supply of all TEMPORAL BLESSINGS : such promises abound all

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through

through the book of God. Verily thou shalt be fed. Pf. xxxvii. 3. My God shall supply all your need. Philip. iv. 19. All things shall be added to you. Matth. vi. 33. Do we want honour? * God will bring us to honour, i. e. the esteem and veneration of men, while we strenuously walk in the line of duty. Them that honour me, I will honour; while those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 1 Sam. ii. 30. Riches and honour are with me. Prov. viii. 18. She, i. e. wisdom, shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. Prov. iv. 8. If any man serve me, him will my father honour. John xii. 26. Do we want riches? God will give us riches, i. e. a competent supply of food and raiment, and a satisfaction of mind with that competency: this is true riches. Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Ye are of more value than many sparrows. Matth. x. 30, 31. If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O! ye of little

* HONOUR is a state of distinction and dignity in the estimation of God so as to be beyond the reach of just disdain, and above the force of rational and deserved suspicion. True religious honour consists in standing in the most honourable connexions with Christ—in possessing the most worthy dispositions like Christ—in exerting the most honourable actions and graces to the glory of Christ—and in enjoying the honourable love and approbation from the heart and language of Christ. This honour infinitely transcends all the distinctions, and titles, and empty bubbles, that monarchs and worlds can bestow upon the proud and haughty sons of men.

little faith ! Matth. vi. 30. He that spared not his own son, will he not with him freely give us all things ? Rom. viii. 32. Do we want health and pleasure ? God has promised, that the ways of Christ shall be health to our flesh and marrow to our bones : his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace. Prov. iii. 8—17.—See Henry's admirable book on the Pleasures of vital Religion, 12mo.—Do we want the strong consolations of God under all the troubles and distresses of life ? such promises we have in rich abundance in Ps. xci. I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. Call upon me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt honour me. Ps. l. 15. I will strengthen them in the Lord. Zech. x. 12. Do we want sanctified afflictions ? and the presence of Christ in all our sorrows ? such sweet assurances of his presence we have in Isai. lxiii. 9. In all their affliction he was afflicted, the messenger of his presence saved them : in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and bare them all the days of old. We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities : he is a merciful and faithful high priest. Heb. ii. 14. It is really astonishing to observe how richly Christ has provided all possible supports under the troubles of life, and has secured to the believer the glorious sanctification of

of all kinds of affliction, so that all things shall work together for good. Every day we want the assistance of God in our duties, conflicts, and trials : such a promise there is in Rom. viii. 26. The Spirit himself helpeth our weakneses : such a promise there is in John xiv. 26. The Spirit of God, the comforter, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance. I will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication. Zech. xii. 10. Ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the irregular and impure desires and actions of the body. Rom. viii. 13. Every day we want a promise of perseverance in grace : such a promise there is in John x. 28. My sheep shall never perish. Who shall separate us from the love of God ? Rom. viii. 35. I will never turn away from them, to do them good ; and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Jer. xxxii. 40. This God is our God for ever and ever. Ps. xlviii. 14. Because I live, ye shall live also. John xiv. 19.

V. BENEVOLENCE, DELIGHT, and GLORY in the holy Scriptures, are a rich and precious disposition of the true christian towards them.

BENEVOLENCE considers an object as worthy to receive good, or as deserving our best affection. Every true christian feels an hearty good will to the holy Scriptures. We have the sensation of good will to an object, when we consider that

X x

object

object as capable of receiving good, and worthy of that good, and of being made happy by the communication of good. Now, in strict propriety of thought, living and intelligent agents are the usual and the first objects of benevolence; and, properly speaking, we cannot be said to have such a benevolence towards the Scriptures, as to communicate any thing towards their happiness, because happiness belongs to living and intelligent beings. But any thing may be said to be the object of benevolence, or good will, when we wish it to prevail and prosper; when we desire it may be respected and loved by mankind: and in this sense all true believers have the highest benevolence towards the precious and immortal book of God: they wish it may be made conspicuous and honourable in the world: they wish it may prevail and prosper in the churches of Christ: that the word of the Lord may have a free course, and may run and be glorified. 2 Thes. iii. 1. They love to hear and see converted sinners glorify the word of the Lord. It gives them high pleasure to have it said, as in Acts xii. 24. The word of God grew and multiplied.

DELIGHT in the LAW and GOSPEL is a most glorious and essential property of the true christian temper.

I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

man. Rom. vii. 22. His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. Pf. i. 2. Unless thy law had been my delight I should have perished in my affliction. Pf. cxix. 92. O! how love I thy law: it is my meditation all the day. Ver. 97.

Delight is a mixture of love and joy in an object that appears beautiful and good, that is nicely adapted to our taste, and suited to promote our happiness. The new and holy nature of a christian is a quality or fitness to converse with all the wonderous discoveries of the word of God: and it may be set down as an ETERNAL AXIOM in practical religion, "That a real believer never has a greater love to the gospel of Christ than he hath to the law of God." He loves the law of God, as it is the copy of the divine holiness: as it is fulfilled by Christ in the sinner's room, for his justification: and as it is a rule of our obedience and loyalty in the hands of Christ, our king. That man who loves the gospel, equally loves the law in those three views of it: and he that loves not the law, most certainly loves not the gospel, but is a real, rank antinomian in the sight of God.

The law of God bears such an impression of the wisdom, goodness, holiness, majesty, dominion, justice, truth, and beauty of God, as must needs be exceedingly agreeable to every regene-

rate soul in the world. Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it. Ps. cxix. 140.— This psalm is the anatomy of the real christian's heart: 'tis the finest piece of EXPERIMENTAL DIVINITY that ever was written: it lays open the various heavenly emotions, passions, and tastes of the believer's soul towards the word of God; and is most richly adapted to our daily use, to assist us in meditation, and in self-examination into our heart and frame towards God and Christ. I cannot wish my dear reader a greater happiness, than that he may feel every hour the same high relish for the Scriptures of God, which the psalmist felt and tasted in all the course of years* which he spent in penning this admirable psalm.

'Tis this delight in the word of God which distinguishes a true christian from all the hypocrites in the world. No hypocrite ever did, or ever will (whilst in that character) delight in the holy law, and the holy gospel of God. None but renewed souls have an hearty approbation of the vast extent and purity of the divine law, and a cordial delight in the grand and holy design of the glorious gospel. The believer delights in the discoveries of the gospel, because they wonderfully improve his understanding; and he delights in the privileges and blessings of the gospel,

* It is very probable that this psalm was more than twenty years in finishing, and may properly enough be stiled a COPY of the BELIEVER'S DIARY.

gospel, because they satisfy the will with good, comfort the conscience, and cheer the heart. DELIGHT is called the great MASTER BEE in the hive of human passions, whose tone and motions govern and guide all the rest. And in the gospel of Christ we have every grand, new, and beautiful discovery to please and enrich the human mind : we have the most abundant good to refresh and delight all our powers. Yea, we may advance higher still, and affirm, that the Scriptures afford matter of the highest glory to true christians.

GLORYING is the opposite to shame ; and as shame is a mixture of sorrow and self-love, attended with self-contempt ; so glorying is a mixture of joy and self-love, with an high degree of self-approbation, arising from our interest in an infinite good, and our vital union with the grandest personage in the universe. I glory in an union of heart with GOD—an union with the eternal nature, will, and affections of God. I glory in the rich and precious privilege of adoption into God's family, which is a greater honour than to be the highest angel in heaven. I glory in all the exceeding great and precious promises, sealed by the blood of Christ, and ratified with the oath of God, who cannot lie ; who cannot perjure himself or take his own name in vain by a false oath. I glory in the eternal Spirit of God : I rejoice in his omnipresence, and his vital agency

in the souls of all true christians: we may love ourselves, and rejoice in our own existence as far as we have good ground to hope we are the subjects of his sacred agency, and the temples of his holy majesty: his presence felt in the soul is the most glorious spring of the brightest holiness, the richest source of motives to the purest morals, and the most dignified conversation. I glory in a special providence, revealed in the Scriptures, as inspecting, guiding, and smiling on all the affairs of every real christian in the world. I glory in the prospect of eternal life beyond the grave, and of victory over death in my passage to that life of holiness and happiness.

VI. GRATITUDE to GOD for a DIVINE REVELATION is another affection which is essential to the true christian. Gratitude is a mixture of complacency and benevolence: it arises from a deep and powerful sense of good, freely and intentionally bestowed on us by a kind and generous benefactor, who was not indebted to us, or under any natural necessity to communicate good to us: and our gratitude is mightily increased, if we are conscious of our unworthiness to receive benefits, and if we know that we have been very guilty and provoking to the person who bestows favours upon us.

Now, if ever there was a call for gratitude in its highest exertion, from the poorest man to the richest

richest benefactor—from a rebellious subject to a forgiving monarch—from a returning prodigal to a compassionate father—from a rescued captive to a powerful redeemer; surely much more is gratitude due from us to our benefactor, father, and friend; who has bestowed upon us the unspeakable gift of a divine revelation.

We owe eternal GRATITUDE to GOD the FATHER: that he should of his meer good will, from everlasting, resolve to give such worthless and provoking enemies a divine revelation. Surely his good will could not be excited by any thing foreseen in us as matter of worth and excellence. We could not purchase his good will, it must be intirely UNBOUGHT: we could not constrain or urge him to give us a Bible, it must be UNFORCED: we did not earnestly implore him to give us a revelation; no, we never prayed for it for one moment; it was entirely UNSOUGHT: we did every thing to provoke him to shut us up in eternal darkness: we tried a thousand ways to put out the glimmering sparks of the light of nature, and therefore a divine revelation was most certainly UNDESERVED. And, therefore, if we set ourselves to think of the supreme original cause of a revelation, we can ascribe it to nothing but the pure, intense, and infinite good will of GOD: and when we have studied ten thousand years, yea, millions of ages, we must still assign the same

same cause of such an unexpected and unspeakable blessing. O! the depth of the riches of the sovereign grace of God! What shall we render to God for this unutterable benefit?

GRATITUDE to God the Son; who has conveyed a divine revelation to us in the streams of his precious blood. We never mean to assert, that Christ's obedience and death caused a will in God to give us the gospel: no, this was impossible. On the contrary, we maintain this as a grand truth, that God's love gave Christ, or was the cause of his incarnation, sufferings, and death: and, therefore, grace in God is the sovereign spring of our whole salvation.*

But grace in God the Father, and infinite worth in the obedience and death of Christ, are not opposites; as Christ's righteousness and sufferings did not cause a will in God to save us, so God's will to save us did not in the least add any worth to the obedience and satisfaction of Christ. This arose intirely from the infinite dignity of his person, and the intrinsic worth and excellence of that righteousness and death, considered as a proper price of redemption, a sacrifice for sin, and a full satisfaction to divine justice: consequently, in the eye of holiness, justice, and truth, the

Bible

* The REIGN of GRACE in every part of our salvation, from its first rise to its consummation in glory, is treated with great judgment and strength of thought, and in masculine language, by the Reverend Mr. Abraham Booth. 8vo.

Bible is now become our portion and rightful property through the blood of Christ: and this thought must enhance the worth of the Scriptures in our esteem, and endear the book of God to our souls beyond all conception. Therefore, every time I take the Bible into my hand, it ought to be with this most grateful reflection: "this is the only book in the world that is bought for me with the death of Christ, and comes down to my bosom and soul in the streams of IMMANUEL'S blood: and as without shedding of blood there is no remission, so without the shedding of Christ's blood I should have had NO BIBLE." O! christians, with what adoring gratitude ought you to receive and improve this precious, this blood-bought revelation!

Hail, O! Christ Jesus! true and eternal God; true and holy man; we love thee; we adore thee; we carry our most flaming gratitude to the footstool of thy throne; we lay our souls at thy feet! we owe thee eternal unbounded thanksgivings and praises, for the purchase and gift of a revelation of thy perfections, thine offices, and thy grace. Here we have an immortal volume which, under the agency of thy SPIRIT, will remove all our plagues—scatter all our doubts and fears—level all mountains of opposition in the way to heaven—confound and demolish all our enemies—and suit all our noblest powers and affections. In

In this revelation we see our plague of darkness and
 ignorance removed by light—our plague of guilt
 removed by a divine and infinite satisfaction—
 our plague of corruption, filth, and rebellion,
 removed by sanctifying grace. Our doubts and
 fears are all scattered: we see thee able to save
 to the uttermost: we see thee as willing and re-
 solved to save as thou art able: and we see thee
 sworn into thine office as a saviour, and sealed by
 God the father, to save millions of souls in every
 age to the end of the world. We see, in the light
 of thy revelation, all mountains of opposition
 levelled into a beautiful plain: holiness, which
 swore that filthy sinners should never approach
 the pure nature of God, is now our reconciled
 friend: justice, which solemnly determined that
 guilty sinners should be damned for ever, is now
 become our guardian: and the deepest depths
 of God's unfathomable heart, which were im-
 penetrable and unknown to men and angels, are
 now made known, to our astonishment and de-
 light. By thy revelation, O! LORD JESUS, the
 charges against us are all answered—the plots
 laid to ruin us are all unravelled—the powers
 of sin and hell, which we could never resist, are
 all confounded and brought to nought. Our
 understandings are filled with glorious light, our
 wills are satiated with the richest good, our
 passions are refined from dregs and pollution,
 and

and raised to the highest heavens, the seat of thy glory. No proportionable returns can ever be made to thee for such immense favours: we are drowned in debt, and lost in wonder. All we can possibly do, is to give ourselves intirely to thee, to be for ever thine: we are not our own: we will not be our own, we will be thine; thy purchase, thy property, and wholly at thy disposal. Conscious of our utter incapacity to make adequate returns for thy grace, we would call on the archangels, and the whole hierarchy of heaven, to lend us hearts to love thee and tongues to celebrate thy perfections: we would summon all creation, in the vast extent of thy universal empire, to praise thy glorious majesty for thy kindness to lost man.

GRATITUDE to GOD the HOLY SPIRIT, for inspiring the penmen of the sacred Scriptures.

The true scripture doctrine of the Holy Spirit was never less regarded since the reformation from popery, than it is now: and every wise man sees the awful consequences. The godhead, personality and agency of the holy Spirit shine with a most conspicuous light all through the Bible: all the works of creation, providence, miracles, inspiration, prophecy, regeneration, and the resurrection of the dead, are ascribed to him in the book of God: and all the beautiful gifts and graces which adorn the minds of true christians,

are derived from his agency on the soul. To be ignorant of his person, as a divine and intelligent agent, is a foul disgrace : to be unmindful of his glorious works is an evidence of black ingratitude, and great insensibility of heart. He deserves our utmost esteem, our most grateful attention. If we are not stupid, with respect to our true interest, we shall desire his vital presence, and feel the strongest benevolence to him, and delight in his presence : we shall consider ourselves under the most mighty obligations to love and adore him as the author of the sacred books of the old and new Testament. The Spirit of God spake by the writers, and his word was on their tongues. His word was in my tongue : the God of Israel spake to me. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost. 2 Pet. i. 21. The Spirit of God gave to the sacred writers a clear conception of their subject : he impressed the mind and conscience with a lively sense of the truth and importance of the matter of the Scripture : he gave them lively sensations of beauty and truth, while they were meditating on their subject : he displayed before their eyes the grand motives which stirred them up to write, addressed to their esteem and fear, their hope, gratitude, godly ambition, interest and pleasure : he freed their minds from all those prejudices which

which are the springs of error within us : and he helped them to write down the truth, the whole truth, that God designed to communicate to the church. Thus he presided over the whole Bible, and finished the CANON of SCRIPTURE with all the DIGNITY, GRACE, and INFALLIBILITY of a God.

Now, my reader, what gratitude is due to this divine and glorious person for his unutterable goodness to dark lost mankind ! what esteem should we have for him ? what good will should we bear to him ? with what pleasure and attention should we read the doctrines, laws, promises, histories, and prophecies, which he has inspired ! and how dutifully ought we to obey the dictates of his word ! 'Tis by his agency that we understand the true sense of Scripture : and by his aid we obey the laws of Scripture. O ! how unspeakable are our obligations to him for help against our pride, our enmity, our infidelity, and impurity. The vilest lusts would rage within us and reign over us every hour, if he was to refuse to suppress the cursed emotions of our polluted nature : he assists us in a seasonable recollection of the infinite evil of sin, and he helps us to call into memory the striking portions of God's word, which forbid our crimes : he gives us an awful sense of the omnipresence of God, and serious impressions of his majesty, holiness, dominion,

dominion, and omnipotence : he aids us to form resolute determinations against sin, and he enables us to fix our will for the worship and service of God. All the light, strength, and beauty of our minds : all the divine elevation and generous fermentation of our devout passions, are owing to his rational, attractive, and godlike agency.

Eternal Spirit, we confess,
And sing the wonders of thy grace ;
Thine inward teachings make us know
Our duty and our dangers too.

Glorious God ! whilst infidels insult thee, and pretended christians despise thine influence : whilst wild enthusiasts disgrace thy character, by laying claim to thine aids, and yet neglect thy sacred word : we, being greatly sensible of our infinite obligations to thee for all the wisdom, integrity, purity, peace, and strength of our minds, prostrate our hearts at the foot-stool of thy majesty ; and, together with the sacred Father and Son, would give thee the highest affection and praises ; longing for that happy moment when, being released from the body, our souls shall evolve, with a divine spring, into all the light and glory of thy presence for ever.

As gratitude to God for a divine revelation is the noblest passion in a christian's heart, it will be pleasing and profitable to carry our thoughts farther

farther upon this subject : it cannot be too often displayed, nor set in too many points of light : we will therefore shew the believer's gratitude to God, as it respects the Bible in seven views of it, as inspired—perfected—preserved—purchased—translated—printed—and now expounded by the most excellent divines in the world.

GRATITUDE is due to GOD for a Bible INSPIRED. The Inspiration of the Scriptures is not now to be proved : it is done already beyond all rational contradiction or doubt : and what a satisfaction must this give to every honest and serious mind. We have now introduced it afresh for the sake of the connexion with the other views of the Bible : and how thankful ought we to be to God, that he has not left us at a loss in this grand fundamental of all true religion. What would it avail us, in point of salvation, if we had no good ground to believe that the Bible was given by an infallible Inspiration of God. This book preserved, printed, translated, and explained, but not inspired, would never bring us to eternal life in perception and fruition of God. It is its full and perfect Inspiration that gives the Bible its complete dignity, perfection, glory, and usefulness ; and for which we are bound to render God the most fervent gratitude and immortal praises.

GRATITUDE is due for a Bible PERFECTED.—How grateful was David for the word of God, although he had no more of it than the five books of Moses; the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and Samuel, with his own inspired Psalms. What ardent affection does he express through that admirable piece of experimental religion, the cxix Psalm! Now, what abundant advantages do we enjoy above the psalmist, and all the believers in the old Testament. We have the glorious writings of Isaiah and the other prophets: we have the still more wonderful and divine volume of the new Testament, completed by that most astonishing book of the Revelations: so that our canon of Scripture will have no addition to it to the end of the world: 'tis a most complete revelation from God; nothing can be taken from it, nothing can be added to it. We have in this god-breathed book a definitive rule of faith, worship, and morals; for which, let all true christians on earth bless and praise God in the highest strains for ever and ever!

GRATITUDE for a Bible PRESERVED.—The Bible has had more enemies than any other book in the world ever had: it has been in ten thousand perils, in many ages, from bitter enemies and false friends. But there have been two tremendous times in which, to speak after the manner
of

of men, the Bible has been in danger of being utterly lost.

THE FIRST CRITICAL SITUATION of the holy Bible was in the time of that cruel and bloody tyrant ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, who violated the temple in the year of the world 3834 ; and before Christ, 170. This desperate man had, by his perpetual and violent wars, almost ruined the whole Jewish nation : he profaned the temple in the most daring manner : he set up the image of Jupiter in the temple of God, and ordered a swine to be boiled, and the broth to be sprinkled about the holy of holies itself. But his malice and outrage against the sacred books of the old Testament was beyond all his other wickedness. He searched up all the Hebrew copies he was able, and burnt them. Yea, he went farther than that : he issued out proclamations through Judea, that every Jew who had a copy of the Bible should deliver it up to be destroyed, upon pain of death : and cowards and traitors to God's book there have been in all ages, who feared man's anger above God's wrath and damning curse. But, blessed be God, there have been brave and resolute servants of Christ, who valued their Bibles above their blood : and so there were in the time of cruel Antiochus. Those blessed heroes preserved the Bible at the hazard of their lives : they feared not the wrath of this proud and cruel tyrant.

No. IX.

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And

And God's justice pursued this desperate man with a singular vengeance : worms bred in his bowels : his flesh rotted off from his bones : there issued from his putrid body such an intolerable stench, that his physicians could not bear the room : and hell took possession of his guilty soul before it was rent from his perishing flesh. A fearful monument of God's dreadful wrath to all men who shall dare to despise, oppose, or persecute the word of God to the end of the world. I hope my young readers will have an active curiosity to read the accounts of this horrid man, in the books of the Apocrypha, 1 Macc. i. and 2 Macc. v. in Usher's Annals p. 317. latin Paris edit. English edit. p. 417. Prideaux's Connexion, vol. 3. p. 237, 258, 284. And Rollin's Ancient History, vol. 6. p. 248. 8vo. edit. of 1768.

THE SECOND CRITICAL TIME OF DANGER with the HOLY SCRIPTURES was in the reign of the emperor *Dioclesian*. I tremble and adore whilst I write. In the year of our Lord 303, and on the 18th day of April, according to Valesius's notes on Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, book 8. chap. 2. p. 141 : on this day Dioclesian, by the instigation of his partner * in empire, set on foot the tenth pagan persecution. † In this FIRST of their three edicts against the christians, the sacred Scriptures

* Maximian Galerius, who married Dioclesian's daughter.

† Dr. Lardner says this tenth persecution began Feb. 23, 303. See vol. 3. of his Testimonies, p. 285.

Scriptures were ordered to be burnt; and Eusebius says, he saw with his own eyes the divine and sacred Scriptures burnt in the market-place. The persecution raged for ten years; and these bloody persecutors imagined they had utterly destroyed the christian religion, and had the insolence to set up pillars and plates of brass, with these inscriptions on them: "In the times of DIOCLESIAN and MAXIMIAN HERCULIUS, and GALERIUS, the NAME of the CHRISTIANS was extirpated." And another inscription ran thus: "That the SUPERSTITION of the CHRISTIANS was every where rooted up, and the WORSHIP of the gods restored." It is with great difficulty that I forbear running on for many pages together, to describe the characters and actions of these cruel and bloody persecutors, the vast extent and horrors of the persecution, and its awful duration, for it lasted ten years; with the terrible deaths of Galerius, in 311, and of Dioclesian, who died at Salone, in Dalmatia, in the year of our Lord 313: but I must stop my hand, for there is no end to these astonishing things. Yet, for the sake of my pious and inquisitive young readers, I will set down some select books, where their laudable curiosity may have a sweet and awful information concerning the victory of the holy Scriptures over their most bloody enemies. I will mention the authors in the order I would

read them if they were all before me at the same time. (1.) Bossuet's Universal History, vol. 1. 12mo. p. 134. who says of Dioclesian's persecution: "The strictest search was made for the SACRED BOOKS, in order to abolish the very memory of them; and the christians durst not have them in their houses, nor almost presume to read them. (2.) Lampe's Ecclesiastical History, book 2. chap. 4. sect. 16. (3.) Millar's Propagation of Christianity, vol. 1. edit. 3. 1731. p. 369. (4.) Crevier's History of the Roman Emperors, 8vo. vol. 9. p. 252. (5.) Dr. John Gillies's Historical Collections, vol. 1. 8vo. p. 16. (6.) Dr. Macknight's Truth of the Gospel History, 4to. p. 516. (7.) Dr. Lardner's Collection of ancient Heathen Testimonies to the Truth of the Christian Religion, vol. 3. 4to. 1766. chap. 40. p. 277—327. of Dioclesian's persecution of the christians. (8.) Dr. Cave's Primitive Christianity, 8vo. edit. 5. 1698. p. 335—339, 368. (9.) Spanheim's Ecclesiastical History, p. 812—814. fol. edit. 1701. (10.) Dr. Newton's Dissertations, vol. 3. 8vo. p. 54, 55. with Lowman on the Revelations, 8vo. edit. 1773. p. 72, 73. (11.) Fox's Acts and Monuments of the Church, vol. 1. p. 85. fol. edit. 1684. (12.) Lastly, I mention the original fountain from whence these great and good men drew their knowledge. Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, folio edit. 1709, with
Valesius's

Valesius's notes. See book 8. chap. 2. book 9. chap. 7.—I will affirm of Eusebius's History, what Dr. Doddridge used to express to his friends concerning Josephus : “ If I had but six books in my library, Eusebius should be one of them.”* And I will farther observe, for the benefit of young divines, that, next to the holy Scriptures, the History of the Church of Christ, in her doctrines, worship, morals, and the great and good divines, who have, in all ages, defended those doctrines by reason, argument, and by their blood ; with the history of the principal errors, deceivers, tyrants, and persecutors, who have attempted to corrupt and exterminate the church ; I say, this history of the two kingdoms of Christ and Satan ought to be the grand object of our study and attention all through life.

I will close this particular with a concise and striking view of the horrid cruelties of the Dioclesian persecution, in the words of a learned historian, of the three first centuries of the church, who has well abridged the larger accounts in Eusebius and others.

“ As this was the last persecution, so it was the most severe of all others, like the last efforts of an expiring enemy, who uses his utmost rage and strength to give a parting blow. It were
endless

* I ought, in justice, to inform my young readers, that the index to the Universal History, vol. 21. 8vo. is an admirable introduction to all studies of this kind, and may be bought separate.

endless and almost incredible to enumerate the variety of sufferers and torments : it must be sufficient to observe in this place, that they were scourged to death—had their flesh torn off with pincers, and mangled and scraped with shells and broken pots—were cast to lions, tygers, and other wild beasts—were burned—beheaded—crucified—thrown into the sea—torn in pieces by the distorted boughs of trees, and by the force of horses—roasted alive over gentle fires—their bowels torn out whilst living—melted lead poured into their bowels—with innumerable other torments, as may be seen in Fox's Martyrology, vol. 1. p. 36—87.

“ This persecution lasted ten years under Dioclesian, and some of his successors. The incredible number of christians that suffered death and punishment, made them conclude that they had completed their work : and in an ancient inscription, they tell the world, that they had effaced the name and superstition of the christians, and had restored and propagated the worship of the gods. But they were so much deceived, that this hastened the destruction of paganism ; and shortly after CHRISTIANITY became VICTORIOUS and triumphant over all the powers of darkness, and the artifices and cruelty of mankind.”—Eachard's Roman History, vol. 2. with some small additions ; and his Ecc. History, p. 451.

Thus

Thus you see, my dear reader, what reason you have to esteem the precious book of God, which has been preserved through such dreadful dangers, and comes down to your hands in the streams of christian blood. But you have an higher motive to love the Bible than this: you owe

GRATITUDE for a Bible PURCHASED; a Bible purchased with the blood of God. The blood of martyrs was polluted with sin, but the blood of Christ was that of a lamb, without blemish, and without spot or taint of treason and rebellion; it was pure blood, and the blood of him who is Jehovah LORD and God, the true, the great and mighty God, who is over all, blessed for evermore. None but socinians, and men who verge towards their horrid principles, will deny that the Bible is the purchase of the blood of God. Holiness, justice, and truth, would never have suffered one line of a gracious revelation to come to us, if there had not been a full provision made for the honour of those most adorable and tremendous attributes of God. And what can more endear the Scriptures to us, than to consider, that now every perfection in God pleads on the footing of Christ's SATISFACTION for our enjoyment of all the eternal blessings of the glorious gospel.

GRATITUDE for a Bible TRANSLATED.—The Bible was translated many hundred years before
the

the art of printing was invented. The FIRST man in England that translated some parts of the Bible into our language, which was then Saxon, was the VENERABLE BEDE,* who flourished about the year of Christ 700.

The SECOND was the great and good JOHN WICKLIFFE,† who flourished from 1360 to 1380; and who is deservedly stiled the MORNING STAR of the REFORMATION.

The THIRD worthy man was JOHN TREVISA, a divine in Cornwall, who is reported to have set forth the whole Bible in English: but an exact account I cannot yet procure.

The FOURTH was the excellent WILLIAM TINDAL,‡ who translated the five books of Moses, and the new Testament, in the year 1527: afterwards he and Miles Coverdale joined in the work, and finished the translation of the whole Bible. I speak nothing of all subsequent translations, as they are generally known. And now, my reader, if the old Testament were always to remain only in the original Hebrew, and the new Testament in Greek, what man in ten thousand through all Britain could ever read or understand one page!

And

* Bede was an English monk, born about the year 672, and died on the 26th of May, 735, aged 63.

† Wickliffe was born near Richmond, in Yorkshire, about the year 1324, and died at Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, in the year 1384.

‡ Tindal was born near Wales, and burnt in the Netherlands in the year 1536.

And how thankful ought we to be, that God has raised up men of strong sense, and sound learning, to translate these sacred books into our own language! Here we see the necessity, dignity, and excellence of a clear knowledge of the sacred languages; and how exceedingly do those good men mistake, who speak in an ungarded and contemptuous manner of learning and learned men: they ought, in truth and justice, to distinguish between the use and the abuse of learning; and whilst bad men, who misapply their talents, should be held in abhorrence, holy and wise men, who use their learning for God, should be had in everlasting honour.

GRATITUDE for a Bible PRINTED.—Before the art of printing was found out, in 1440, a Bible, written on vellum or parchment, would cost one hundred pounds sterling: and if this was the case now, not one person in ten thousand, through all England, could ever have a Bible: and what a deplorable state would you be in without this precious book of God! How ought you and I to bless God for ever and ever, who taught man this happy and most glorious art of printing! Now the copies of the Bible are multiplied to so many millions, that I trust the papists can never be able to burn them all: and a Bible is rendered so very cheap as to come almost within
the

the power of the poorest person to purchase * a book that was originally bought for us with the infinitely-precious blood of the Son of God.

GRATITUDE for a Bible EXPOUNDED by the most excellent men in the world.—It is a true remark of the amiable Mr. Matthew Henry, “ That as preachers would not be believed without Bibles to back them, so Bibles would not be understood without ministers to explain them.” (Pref. to Exposit. vol. 1.) Wise and serious christians will avoid all foolish extremes: they will neither idolize expositions, nor vilify them: they will not set up the works of good men to a neglect of the Bible: nor will they despise the excellent productions of long study and ardent devotion. They will say with the modest and humble lord-treasurer to Philip, How can I understand the Scriptures without some man to guide me? Acts viii, 31. And this is fully consistent, with the use of our own best judgment, to form a final determination concerning the true sense of Scripture for the direction of our faith, worship, and moral conduct. Fully convinced of the propriety of these sentiments, I go on to observe, for the benefit of my young readers,

* I can never enough esteem and recommend the society for promoting religious knowledge among the poor; by which, above nine hundred pounds worth of Bibles, and other good books, are annually given away: and let it never be forgotten, that this society began, in 1750, with the sum of twenty-six shillings, laid down by those excellent men, now in heaven, messrs. Joseph and Benjamin Forst.

readers, and especially those of a certain character and office in the church of Christ, that one of the most able expositors of our nation, and the first in point of time, is that great and excellent man, Dr. Simon Patrick. This eminent man possessed a very strong and sound natural understanding: his learning was immense and well digested: his religion was deep, and matured by long experience, and under the direction of clear masculine reason. In a word, I know not any expositor, at the age of more than seventy years, that ever wrote with such perspicuity of thought and strength of mind; and what is still better, with such a divine savour, and in the spirit of the gospel, as the Paraphrase on the Psalms and the Song of Solomon fully evince.

Mr. Matthew Henry's Exposition is peculiarly excellent for the sweet notes and sprightly turns of thought which every where abound: 'tis impossible for a person of piety and taste to read him without wishing to be shut out from all the world to read him through, without one moment's interruption.

Dr. John Guise's Exposition of the new Testament evinces that he was a great and solid divine, of a truly evangelical heart, and well digested learning: every page has an high tendency to instruct the mind, and make us steady and substantial christians.

Dr. Doddridge's Family Expofitor has three diftinguifhing excellencies—his improvements breathe a genuine, lively, and elevated devotion—his critical notes lead us more fully into the fpirit, energy, and beauty of the f acred original—his new tranflation and paraphrafe oftentimes difcover the penetration and elegant fagacity of his mind to obferve the various movements of good and bad hearts, difplayed in the f acred writings : in this point of view the doct or fhines above all other expofitors.

Dr. Gill's Exposition of the old and new Teftament is an ocean of found divinity. The remarkable excellencies of this great work are confiftency with his truly evangelical principles throughout the whole—immense reading and vaft reſearches into all the principal books * of antiquity and hiftory, which may any ways elucidate the f acred writings.

Vitringa, the Expofitor of Ifaiah, in 2 vols. folio, 1709, is a man of aftonifhing erudition and evangelical favour : he is above all my commendation ; and, therefore, I can only fay what I know to be fact ; that he was the favourite of the late Mr. James Hervey, whoſe genius for f acred and devotional criticiſm is undoubtedly
above

* I do not mention the vaſt treaſures of learning in the Jewiſh Targums and Talmuds, which this great man poſſeſſed above all the divines of our age.

above all censure and all praise : he often wished, that the richest part of Vitringa had been abstracted, and published by itself for the use of pious and learned students of divinity.

Dr. Owen's Exposition of the epistle to the Hebrews, 4 vols. folio, is a work of amazing depth of thought and strength of mind : but that which distinguishes this elaborate performance above all the Expositions I ever read, is the high-spirited unction of gospel piety with which he writes. You have a strain of such profound christian experience in this most admirable author as can hardly be paralleled in any other English divine : and what is farther wonderful in this Exposition, even in the midst of the most genuine piety, he demonstrates, with the greatest force of argument, the glorious doctrines of the gospel ; he detects the falshood, and demolishes the principles of the most corrupt and dangerous system of socinianism : and I will add, that none of the abettors of those principles will meddle with Dr. Owen's arguments, but to their own confusion.

The beautiful and genuine Expositions of select and striking passages of the old and new Testament, in the works of Mr. Hervey, and that prince of all divines, Witfius, in his *Œconomy of the Covenants*, can never be too often read, or too much commended.

In

In Dr. WITSIUS's 4th book of the *Œconomy*, chap. 1. he unfolds the doctrine of salvation in the first age of the world; and explains the first gospel promise, (Gen. iii. 15) in such a copious, judicious, and evangelical manner, that I must confess I never met with its equal in any writer. His illustration of the serpent—his eating dust all the days of his life—the comfort designed for man—in the evils denounced on the devil—the enmity between the two seeds—the author of these benefits, Jehovah—the seed of the woman largely explained, and why Christ is not called the seed of Adam—how Christ bruises the serpent's head—and how the devil bruises his heel. All these particulars are most gloriously illustrated by this great divine, so that I scruple not to call his exposition of this one text, *THE WHOLE GOSPEL IN MINIATURE*.

But I should be wanting in affection to my young readers, if I did not just point out some farther beautiful illustrations of Scripture in Dr. Witsius's and Mr. Hervey's works. To the above judicious and elegant Exposition of the first Gospel Promise, in Dr. Witsius's *Œconomy*—his Illustration of the Covenant of Peace, in Zech. vi. 13. book 2. chap. 2.—his beautiful Remarks on the seven Eyes on one Stone, Zech. iii. 8. book 2. chap. 7. sect. 7.—and his deep and judicious Thoughts on the Law as the
Strength

Strength of Sin, book 3. chap. 8. sect. 44.—
with his Views of Adoption, book 3. chap. 10.
sect. 14. These, with many others that will oc-
cur in reading the *CEconomy*, will please and
astonish a person of true devotional taste, if he
shall read them to the end of life.

In Mr. Hervey's *CONTEMPLATIONS* you see, on
those words, Will God in very deed dwell with
man! some elevated and admirable thoughts,
vol. 1. p. 6. but his grand Illustration of the
10th chapter of the Revelations is beyond all
description sublime and striking. Nothing in
any *Expositor* I ever read or heard of can com-
pare with his representation of the angel swear-
ing that time shall be no longer. See *Contem-
plation on the Night*. To which I must add his
fine Paraphrase on that Representation of God's
Compassion, in *Isai. xlix. 15.* in his *Contempla-
tion on the Starry Heavens*, p. 119. edit. 2.
12mo.

In his *DIALOGUES*, the beautiful illustrations
of passages of Scripture are so numerous and
abundant, that I must mention but one, (for
there is no end of all :) and I am certain, that
if you read it ten thousand times, it will always
please. I will say, in his words on the text, if
these reflections do not contain the true sublime,
in its utmost scope and fullest beauty, I profess I
never saw it, nor ever expect to see it. Read his
notes

notes on Rev. xx. 11. on the white throne, and the heavens and earth flying away from the presence of the Son of God. Vol. 3. letter 8.

In his LETTERS to Mr. Wesley, p. 59, you have a most glorious and divine exposition of some striking parts of the 40th chapter of Isaiah. Only read those remarks; that will be their best recommendation.

In Dr. LOWTH'S PRÆLECTIONES we have the same true spirit of manly and elegant criticism on a vast variety of sublime passages in the psalms and prophets: and I must declare it as my judgment, that Dr. Witfius, Mr. Hervey, and Dr. Lowth, considered in their native genius, imagination, and taste; the rational and delicate conduct of their studies; the elevation, penetration, and grandeur of their conceptions; their tender and devout passions; and their masterly command of language in point of perspicuity, purity, and energy, must set them in a very distinguishing eminence as the first writers on Scripture ever known in the world. And we may remark, that whilst we read authors of the first rank for taste, learning, and eloquence, they always instruct; they never disgust, but ever elevate our powers, refine our passions, and give new pleasures on every fresh perusal. And christians of the best sense and judgment will never despise or speak evil of such excellent expositors of Scripture,
but

but will feel, in their best moments, the most ardent gratitude to God the Redeemer, who is the author of all those shining talents which adorn the brightest men in the world.

VII. DELIGHT in the SCRIPTURES as the clear and only DISCOVERY of the SUPREME GOOD, CHRIST JESUS, the SON of GOD.

When we mention GOOD in this place, we not only contemplate *objective* and *absolute* GOOD, merely in its own nature, but likewise as *relative* to our happiness. Our faculties are soon at their utmost limits in contemplating God as an absolute good ; but when we consider him as related to us, and as producing our happiness, the prospects are various, ravishing, infinite, and eternal ; and in this light I shall consider the Lord Jesus Christ.

An object may be considered as fit to make us happy by its own immediate influence—or as removing misery—or preventing misery—or as preparing a man for happiness, by restoring and perfecting the faculties and principles of fruition to enable a man to enjoy happiness. Now, in all these views, Christ is to be considered as the supreme good : he is fit to make us happy by his own immediate influence—he is able and willing to remove all our misery—he is resolved to prevent eternal misery—and he prepares us for

B b b

happiness,

happiness, by restoring our depraved powers to liberty, purity, and strength; and infusing such noble and sublime principles of fruition as shall fit us ever to contemplate and love the supreme, objective, and absolute good.

And this shews the unspeakable and transcendent excellence of true holiness diffused through the soul by the Lord Jesus; as it prepares a man's faculties for happiness; strengthens the understanding, rectifies the will, refines the taste for the purest enjoyments; purifies and elevates the affections to their best objects, and thus enables the soul to converse with the SUPREME TRUTH, GOODNESS, and BEAUTY, to eternity.

THE ESSENTIAL PROPERTIES AND CHARACTERISTICS of the SUPREME, objective, and relative GOOD, all center in the eternal SON of GOD.

The supreme good of man, or that which constitutes his everlasting happiness, must be agreeable and satisfying to our highest *capacities*, and suitable to the most elevated and refined *taste*—fitted to all situations and conditions in life—suited to all offices, and worthy employments—may be enjoyed without blushes and shame, i. e. sorrow and self-contempt—possessed without suspicion of being a fool: and without dread of ill consequences—and which comforts a man and blesses him with serenity under all the troubles

troubles of life—refines and sweetens the passions of the heart—will abide the severe test of sound reason, and endure the most judicious review and the most impartial reflection—improves upon longer experience—grows still better on enjoyment—and whilst the more we possess it, and the deeper we drink into the spirit of this good, it yields sweeter fruitions on the most frequent repetitions : and, in point of duration, this good is eternal as our existence, and large as our immortal capacities of happiness. This must be the SUPREME GOOD !

Now all these glorious properties, and excellent characteristics of the SOVEREIGN GOOD of man, belong, in the highest and noblest sense, to our DIVINE and glorious REDEEMER. Christ, as the SUPREME GOOD of man, must be that alone which constitutes our everlasting happiness : he is the sole good that is agreeable and satisfying to the highest capacities of our souls : he is, indeed, the SUPREME TRUTH and goodness suited to OUR SUPREME POWERS of enjoyment, and suitable to the most elevated and refined taste : his grace, i. e. his good will to us and his good work in us, is fitted to all the situations and conditions of our life, and to all the worthy offices and characters we can sustain : his tenderest friendship may be enjoyed without blushes and shame, i. e. sorrow and self-contempt ; his purest good-

ness may be possessed without the painful suspicion of being a fool; and without the least dread of future bad consequences: his patronage and love will comfort a man, and bless him with serenity under all the trials and troubles of life, and the terrors of death: his grace refines and sweetens the passions of the heart: and the most intense union of soul with his person will abide the severe test of sound reason: the sweetest sense of his friendship and converse will endure the most judicious review and impartial reflection: an interest in him, as the supreme beauty and good, improves upon longer experience; and grows still better on farther enjoyment: and, whilst the more we possess his love, and the deeper we drink into the SPIRIT of this GOOD, it yields sweeter FRUITIONS on the most frequent REPETITIONS: * and, in point of duration, this
divine

* The VANITY of the WORLD appears in a most striking and convincing light when set in contrast with the SUPREME GOOD, the LORD JESUS. Worldly good, and sensual unlawful pleasure, cannot be suitable to our supreme powers of fruition: they are not at all adapted to a refined and elevated taste: they are not fit to make us happy in all conditions and characters in life. Unlawful pleasures cannot be enjoyed without blushes and shame. A sensualist must feel shame, i. e. sorrow and self-contempt: he never can have one moment's solid self-approbation: nor can he possess his pleasures without the painful suspicion of being a fool, and a most pungent and alarming dread and horror at future bad consequences; which stings gall and wormwood into his cup, and embitters all his insatiable desires of pleasing sensations. The man of the world has nothing to comfort him under the vexatious trials of this perishing life, or the more awful terrors of approaching death: he has nothing to refine and sweeten, but every thing to pollute the affections, and sour the passions of the heart: his guilty pleasures will never bear the severe test of sound reason, and the
trial

divine friend is eternal as our existence; and his fulness of perfections and grace are large as our immortal capacities of happiness. He must, therefore, be indeed the SUPREME BEAUTY, and the SUPREME TRUTH and GOOD to MAN.

RECOLLECTION.

We must close this Contemplation with a short review of what we have said. — We have considered, my dear reader, that the Scriptures demand the utmost wonder and veneration: the firmest faith in their infallible truth and certainty: the highest esteem for their inexpressible dignity and excellence: the most ardent desire after their true SENSE, and the blessings contained in the exceeding great and precious PROMISES: they demand all the good will of the human heart; the most exquisite delight and glory in the rich discoveries of law and gospel. We have taken a survey of that sublime and high-spirited GRATITUDE which every true christian owes to

God

trial of an impartial review: his foul and groveling gratifications can never improve upon longer experience, nor grow better on farther enjoyment: but, on the contrary, the more frequently his impure pleasures are repeated, the more flat and insipid they will grow; and the more pain and disgust they will create, the more nauseous, loathsome, and horrible they will be; the more the wretch will be weary of life, be disgusted with his own existence, and all its polluted sensations: and whilst the worthless profligate drinks deeper into the cup of intoxication and poison, the more sickness of soul he will feel: and the most frequent repetitions of these filthy frictions of debauch, will render his guilty soul the more weak, wicked, turbulent, and forfeited, to the very end of life. — Read Bp. HOPKINS's admirable DEMONSTRATION of the VANITY of the WORLD, in his works. Folio,

God the Father, Son, and holy Spirit, for a Bible inspired, perfected, preserved, purchased with divine blood, translated, printed, and expounded by some of the wisest and best men that ever existed in the whole world. We resumed the affection of delight for the sake of a special and peculiar object, who deserves and demands all the most unbounded delight that millions of good men and angels can ever feel; and who is, and ever will be, the highest object of delight to the eternal God the Father, who rests his heart in him; who boasts of him to his whole happy empire; and triumphs, with all the joy of a God, in those ravishing words: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have an entire acquiescence and delight."

And shall we not then, O! Lord Jesus, consider thee as an object of complete delight and joy! shall not our ideas of Christ meet thine, O! divine Father! shall not our supreme powers and passions, rising to God in an heavenly flame, re-echo back, This is thy beloved Son, in whom our souls are eternally well pleased! We are pleased, O! divine redeemer, with thy grandeur and dominion: with thine immense wealth and riches: thine infinite wisdom and knowledge: thine irresistible power and strength. We rejoice in the joy and unbounded delights of thine heart: we triumph in thine highest honours, thy peer-

less dignity, and eternal fame : we love thee for thine incomparable beauty : we rejoice, that neither men or devils can finally eclipse thy lovely perfections, or diminish thy happiness, or disturb thy repose and pleasure : we can add nothing to thee ; but 'tis a joy of heart to us, that thou art, and ever wilt be, the supreme BEAUTY, and the supreme TRUTH and GOODNESS to our souls when time shall be no more. Amen.

Select BOOKS to be read on the Subject of this CONTEMPLATION.

1. Read the excellent Mr. BENJAMIN BENNETT's beautiful display of the USEFULNESS of the several parts of SCRIPTURE for doctrine, conviction of errors, correction of morals, and instruction in righteousness, in his Sermons on the Truth and Inspiration of Scripture. Sermon. 12, 13. And on the practical Dispositions and Affections due to Scripture. Sermon. 14.

2. Bp. HALL's CONTEMPLATIONS on the HISTORICAL Parts of SCRIPTURE, 3 vols. 8vo. Edinburgh edit. 1770, surpasses every work of the kind, and, indeed, exceed all our praises.

3. As Bp. HOPKINS's admirable TREATISE on the VANITY of the WORLD is a striking contrast to the BEAUTY and FULNESS of Christ, as the SUPREME GOOD, I will here give a short abridgment of that work ; and I the rather do it, because the book itself is little known, and because great numbers of people are eternally undone by an excessive love of worldly things.

The bishop's discourse takes its rise from these words, Eccl. i. 2. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. He begins by observing, that there is nothing in the world vain, in respect to its natural being—that nothing is vain in respect of God the creator—that, therefore, all the vanity that is in worldly things, is only in respect of the sin and folly of man, which perverts the right use of all things. He goes on to display the vanity of the world

world in ten heads. 1. All its glory and splendor depends merely on opinion and fancy: 'tis our imagination that paints the world in strong colours. 2. The vanity of the world appears in its deceitfulness and treachery: it betrays our hopes into delusion, and our souls into guilt. 3. The world is a vexatious vanity, in four views—vexation in getting riches and pleasures—vexation in enjoying them—vexation in losing worldly goods—and whether we get or lose, we are still disappointed in our hopes. 4. A little cross will embitter great comforts and sensual pleasures. 5. The longer we enjoy worldly things, the more flat and insipid they grow. 6. All the sensual pleasures of the world are only a tedious repetition of the same things; the same shallow sensations. 7. The world can stand us in no stead under the horrors of a guilty conscience, and at the dreadful hour of death. 8. The world is vain, because 'tis unsuitable to the nature and powers of a soul—the soul is spiritual; the world is gross—the soul is immortal; the world is perishing—the necessities of the soul are quite of another kind from worldly things. 9. The vanity of the world appears in its inconsistency and fickleness; the world is full of perpetual variations; there is no certain stability in any one worldly thing. 10. The vanity of the world appears in this, that it never satisfies. The highest condition cannot free us from cares and crosses: and be our condition what it will, we still desire change. We can no more rest in an high estate than in a low one: we still desire something farther and better. Hence see the gross folly, madness, and guilt of most men in idolizing a meer vanity.

N. B. I wish this smart little book was re-printed for the use of the rising age.

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A
CONTEMPLATION
ON
ZEAL FOR THE HONOUR AND PROPAGATION
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES.

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H O L Y S C R I P T U R E S .

The NATURE of HOPE, and its EXERCISE on the DISCOVERIES of the WORD of GOD.—SUBJECTION, and ready OBEDIENCE of SOUL and CONSCIENCE to the whole WILL of GOD in SCRIPTURE.—ZEAL for the HONOUR of SCRIPTURE, and ardent ATTEMPTS to diffuse the KNOWLEDGE of SCRIPTURE to the utmost of our ABILITIES.—The most pungent MOTIVES to ZEAL briefly represented.

VIII. **H** O P E of being happy in the possession of the HONOURS and JOYS discovered in the SCRIPTURE, is another affection due to the word of God, and essential to the spirit and character of a true christian.

In our glorious book, the grand objects of hope are most clearly revealed—the grace of hope is powerfully infused—the exercises of hope are richly encouraged—and the fruits and works of hope are most generously rewarded.

C c c 2

Hope

Hope is the ardent desire and expectation of absent good. Faith regards objects as present to the mind : but hope considers those objects and blessings as absent. And this affection is raised and cherished in the soul by the clear prospect of the possibility and probability of enjoying them, founded on the sincerity and faithfulness of God in his promises ; the oath of God, which has confirmed those promises ; the blood of Christ, which has bought those blessings ; and the infinite fulness of the grace and power of Christ to apply all those promises to the soul.

As the grace of hope will be considered at large in a subsequent part of this work, we must not enlarge upon it here. I shall only shew how the rich fulness of Christ, revealed in Scripture, is the precious object of the christian's hope.

The fulness of Christ consists in the infinite all-sufficiency of his nature for his own happiness, and for the complete happiness of all his people, without the least deficiency or failure through our eternal duration. In him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Col. ii. 9. This is his essential fulness.—It hath pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell. Col. i. 19. Of his fulness we have all received, and grace for grace. John i. 16. Full of grace and truth. This is his relative and diffusive fulness towards us. His essential fulness as God,

and his relative fulness as mediator, both conspire to raise our hope to the most sublime height and vast extent into eternity. The whole fulness of the Deity substantially dwells in him : his human nature is the temple of the Deity : and all the perfections of God, in their utmost fulness and glory, abide for ever in his incarnate person : and the fulness or perfection of Deity is a natural idea of all that is comprehended in Godhead. * Now hope views Christ in all his fulness, as revealed in Scripture ; and this excites its most lively and vigorous exercise : and, indeed, what can there be to damp or discourage our hopes, when we view him in his full glory and dignity, becoming a subsistence in the eternal person of the Son of God. Full in his communion with his divine father ; delighting always in him—full in a sufficiency to answer every end of God the Father's grace—full to the utmost capacity of an uncreated God ; and full to the utmost capacity of the most wonderful and glorious creature—full of the greatest beauty and loveliness of a living temple—full of a divine satisfaction to infinite justice—full of a divine and infinite righteousness to justify our souls—full of a divine and infinite spirit to sanctify our hearts—full to suit all sorts of necessities at all times, and in all conditions in which his dear people can possibly be—full in the most active

* Dr. Guise,

and ardent readiness of bounty to supply all sorts of wants—full in the abilities of a God to gain a perfect victory over all kinds of temptations, trials, and oppositions whatsoever, from men or devils—full as a complete example, or beautiful pattern of obedience to angels, but especially to all believers in the world—full to give the utmost pleasure and delight to all holy souls; and to give infinite pleasure to his divine father—full to be an everlasting memorial of the grace and glory of the Father, in giving such unparalleled excellencies to the Son of Man in union with the Son of God.*

Now, clear views of this astonishing fulness of Christ, revealed in the gospel, have the fittest tendency to cherish the most vigorous hopes of enjoying all sorts of blessings for this life, and that which is to come. Hope is one of the most delightful affections of the mind: and is the support and guide of the soul in all sorts of labours, trials, and afflictions: it is of a cheering and enlivening nature: and it is an abiding grace at all times: 'tis an ever living grace, and is always more or less in exercise. Hope has this remarkable and singular property, that it is living when other graces seem to be ready to die; and when a true christian is in the worst condition, he cannot give up his hope; nor will he

* See Dr. Owen on Communion with Christ in Grace, p. 72. edit. 1657.

he PART WITH IT FOR ALL THE WORLD.—See Dr. Wright on Hope, in his Great Concern, 8vo. p. 201. And Dr. Gill on Hope. Body of Practical Divinity, p. 99.

In a word, this lively scriptural hope produces the most noble and sublime FORTITUDE : it raises a man above the frowns of the world, the rage of hell, and the terrors of death : it carries us cheerfully through all the difficulties of life, and makes hard things easy to the mind : it keeps us from the two extremes of true fortitude—rashness and insensibility, and fearfulness and impatience : it cherishes real MAGNANIMITY or greatness of soul, which raises a man above the influence of the *good* or *evil* things of this world.*

IX. SUBJECTION and intire OBEDIENCE of SOUL and CONSCIENCE to the whole WILL of GOD in SCRIPTURE, is another essential DISPOSITION of the true CHRISTIAN.

The grand fundamental law in God's rational empire is love : it resembles the supreme, universal, and eternal law of gravitation in the Newtonian

* A man of true MAGNANIMITY does not think an affluence of worldly goods necessary to make him happy ; nor does he leave it in the power of the evil things of the world to make him miserable. He who will not be a slave to PERSONS, hating all subjection which is not founded in justice and reason, will, from the same principle, scorn to be enslaved to THINGS ; for SLAVERY is the same, *whoever* or *whatsoever* be the TYRANT. A man that hopes to dwell eternally with God in the highest heavens, disdains all slavery to TYRANT PERSONS or TYRANT THINGS.—See Grove's Mor, Philos. vol. 2. p. 177—179.

tonian system of the natural world, which rules every particle of matter, from the vast mass in the body of the sun, to the least grain of dust under our feet: not an atom, that God has made, is exempted from this law for one moment through universal nature.* And thus it is in the moral world with respect to the grand law of love: it binds every rational mind that God has made, to universal and eternal love to God and our fellow-creatures. From this law God will never depart; it never can be relaxed for one moment, with respect to any one rational creature in heaven, earth, or hell: the eternal and immutable rectitude of God binds it down on every conscience in the world: and in the church of Christ his law is farther explained, beautified, extended, and enforced, beyond all that reason ever knew. By this law I am bound to esteem God as the most excellent existence in himself—to desire his presence above all things—to bear the most ardent good will to him, as worthy to receive all possible good—and to delight

* Of all the philosophical writers I ever read, no man equals the most sagacious and devout Mr. Andrew Baxter, in his Enquiry into the Nature of the human Soul, with the Appendix; and his Dialogues, styled *Matho*. I say, no man equals him for incessant attention to the agency of God in the natural world. Justice has not yet been fully done to this great man; but I hope a Time will soon come in which his excellent character shall be set in a fairer light by some friends that love his name. At present I can only hint, that this worthy man was born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, in the year 1687, and died at Willingham, in East-Lothian, March, 1750, aged 63. I detest the ingratitude of the present age for paying no attention to his memory.

light in him as the life and joy of my immortal soul. By this law I am bound to love all mankind as myself: and more especially to esteem every true christian as possessor of the most lovely qualities ---to desire their happiness equally with that of my own soul---to bear the most perfect good will to their persons and interests, as worthy to receive all possible good from me. I am bound to delight in their company, to rejoice in their salvation, and do every thing in my power to promote their felicity; and to avoid every thing that may injure their noblest interests, by invading the rights of their consciences, or refusing to allow them all the comforts and privileges of the sons of God.

I can give only a small specimen of that subjection of soul and conscience to the will of God in Scripture, which is so essential to the temper of a true christian.

GOD commands in his word, Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart. Matth. xxii. 37. The christian replies, I will love thee, O! Lord, my strength. Ps. xviii. 1. GOD says, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved. Acts xvi. 31. The soul replies, Lord, I do believe; help thou mine unbelief. Mark ix. 24. GOD says, Grieve not the holy Spirit. Eph.

Eph. iv. 30. The soul replies, Thy spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness. Ps. cxliii. 10. God says, Ye that love the Lord, hate evil. Ps. xcvi. 10. The soul replies, I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love. Ps. cxix. 113. God says, be sober, be vigilant. 1 Pet. v. 8. The soul replies, I will keep under my body, and bring it into subjection. 1 Cor. ix. 27. God says, How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee? Jer. iv. 14. The soul replies, Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Ps. li. 10. God commands; Be not proud. Jer. xiii. 15. The soul replies, Lord, my heart shall not be haughty. Ps. cxxxi. 1. God says, Put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. 1 Pet. iii. 4. The soul replies, I will take heed to my ways, and keep my mouth with a bridle. Ps. xxxix. 1. God says, be not slothful in business, but be fervent in spirit. Rom. xii. 11. The soul replies, I will keep thy precepts diligently. Ps. cxix. 4, 8. God commands, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Matth. xxii. 39. The soul replies, I would love mine enemies, and do good to them that hate me. Luke vi. 35. If my enemy hunger, I will feed him. Rom. xii. 20. God says to his people, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. John xiii. 34. The soul replies, My goodness extendeth to the
faints,

faints, the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight. Pf. xvi. 2, 3. GOD says, Do justly, love mercy. Micah vi. 8. The soul replies, Let INTEGRITY and UPRIGHTNESS preserve me. Pf. xxv. 21. I have an ardent regard for the rights of all men, and feel a fixed determination to preserve those rights inviolate. GOD commands us to an unfeigned love of the brethren with a pure heart fervently. 1 Pet. i. 22. The soul replies, I love the brethren, and I will love them for ever. Therefore I am assuredly passed from death unto life. 1 John iii. 14.

But we must stop our hand; for you see, my dear reader, there would be no end, if we were to enter minutely into all the duties and graces of the christian life: let it suffice, at present, to observe, that there is not a true believer on earth but, in his best moments, aims to please GOD in all things, and wishes to do it at all times: and he ardently desires to know the whole will of GOD, in order to perform it without any reserve, or stated allowance in sin; and he wishes to be sincere and consistent with his principles in his thoughts, words, and actions. No man can enjoy any solid comfort in his soul, if he is destitute of the above disposition: for then only can we say, we are not ashamed when
we

we have respect to all God's commandments.*
Pf. cxix.

X. ZEAL for the HONOUR of the holy SCRIPTURES, and for the PROPAGATION of their glorious EVIDENCES and DISCOVERIES through the WORLD, is another essential BRANCH of the true CHRISTIAN TEMPER.

Zeal is a mixed passion, composed of the most vehement love, and high degrees of rational, fervent anger; for whatever object a man sincerely loves, he desires to see it honoured with the highest distinction and respect; and he rises into a vivid ferment of anger to see it undervalued, despised, and trampled under foot with contempt and scorn.

The

* THE GRAND TEST of a true CHRISTIAN'S OBEDIENCE to the word of God consists in the following things:

1. To mortify his dearest lusts; signified by the command to pluck out a right eye, and cut off a right hand. Matth. v. 29, 30. And to cut off a right foot. Mark ix. 45.
2. To forgive the keenest and worst personal injuries, upon repentance of the offender, even to seventy times seven. Matth. xviii. 22. Luke xvii. 4.
3. To deny ourselves daily, in our self-will and self-righteousness; and to take up our cross and follow Christ. Matth. xvi. 24. Mark viii. 34. Luke ix. 23.
4. To do good for evil: if our enemy hunger, give him meat; if he thirst, give him drink; and overcome all evil with good. Prov. xxv. 21. Rom. xii. 20, 21.
5. To hate father and mother, husband or wife, houses, lands, and children; yea, our own life, when any of these come in competition with the glory and cause of Christ. Luke xiv. 26.

6. To

The Bible is a book of such transcendent worth, that it deserves and demands the utmost honour from men and angels.

The honour of the holy Scriptures consists in the following things:---they are the product of the eternal understanding of God, and the copy of the grace and justice of his heart---they stand closely connected with all the divine perfections, and contain the whole plan of the moral government of God from the beginning to the end of the world---they are sealed with the blood of the Son of God, and were infused into the minds of wise and holy men by the eternal Spirit---they have been the grand means of converting millions of men from sin to holiness, and from misery to happiness†---they contain a clear discovery of all
good

6. To be heartily willing to lay down our lives for the brethren, because we perceive and feel the love of God in laying down his life for us. 1 John iii. 16.

7. To confess our connexion and attachment to Christ, as the Son of God and our redeemer, with a daring intrepidity before the whole world; being fully convinced, that if we confess him, he will acknowledge us before his father; and if we are ashamed of and deny him before men, he will be ashamed of us and deny us before his father and his holy angels at the last judgment. Matth. x. 32, 33. Luke xii. 8, 9.

N. B. These seven glorious acts constitute the grand CRITERIONS, or MARKS of sincere and universal obedience to the will and word of God.

† All the light and wisdom; all the life, and strength, and beauty, of holy souls; all their support and consolation in the duties of religion, in the troubles of life, and terrors of death, have flowed from the holy Scriptures for thousands of years past. The church of God hath lived upon the Scriptures, and, by their means, has triumphed over all her enemies to this very day; and will do so to the end of the world. What a state of dignity, honour, and usefulness do the Scriptures hold in God's empire!

good and bad characters that ever have been, or ever shall be, in God's rational creation---they have been punctually fulfilled in the natural and moral world to the present hour, and are now fulfilling in the world. God is resolved to support their credit and authority with all the wisdom of his mind, the grace and vengeance of his heart, and the power of his omnipotent arm. These sacred and lively oracles must survive all their enemies, and triumph over all opposition. Kings and beggars must bow or break to pieces, and be grinded to powder under their force. God is determined to trample all resistance to the Scriptures under his feet. Their dignity will farther appear in a most illustrious manner, when they shall become the grand instrument of blessing the whole world of mankind, and spreading knowledge, holiness, and happiness all over the earth.

They will appear the standard and rule of God's universal judgment at the last day, and will shine forth in their final accomplishment before devils, men, and angels. Yea, farther still, when ten thousand times ten thousand ages are rolled off beyond the day of judgment, these Scriptures will be then fulfilling in the torments of the damned, and the happiness of the righteous: and thus the threatnings of justice, and the promises of grace shall never, never have an end.

GREAT

GREAT and IMMORTAL GOD! what veneration, love, and honour, doth thy book deserve and demand! Forgive me, that I almost dishonour thy Scriptures, whilst I attempt to praise: pity the poverty and littleness of my understanding, and forgive the coldness, the indifference, the ingratitude, and irreverence of my heart: fire my passions into the most ardent devotion, and graciously accept my feeble, but sincere attempt to do everlasting honour to thy holy word!

Let us now take a prospect of the most weighty motives to excite us to pay eternal attention to the Scriptures, and exert the most vigorous, wise, and unbounded zeal for their honour, and the propagation of their glorious contents through the British empire.

Let the following train of thoughts have their full force on all the springs of action within us, to animate us to the most godlike public spirit to our last hour on the bed of death.

God the Father is exceedingly zealous for the honour and propagation of his divine revelation: God the Son has the revival of the credit of his word deeply and powerfully at heart: God the holy Spirit values the book which he himself inspired, above all the worlds his hands have made: the sublime doctrines of grace deserve and demand our utmost zeal: God will be very zealous
for

for those servants of his who are ardently zealous to propagate the discoveries of his heart far and wide, at home and abroad.

How can the zeal of a rational human soul be expended if it is not laid out for the honour and credit of the word of God? What a small part of the world are capable of zeal for the glory and display of the Scriptures? and how few in the church of Christ are zealous to proclaim the glad news of salvation? How detestable is neutrality and lukewarmness concerning this blessed and God-breathed book? How must the Lord Jesus abhor a coldness and indifference for that book which he bought with his blood and soul? What cursed mischief has lukewarmness towards the Scriptures done in all ages? and what astonishing objects of the invisible world are there ever near us, to rouse us to the most vivid and flaming zeal! Objects so new, so grand, so lovely, and so awful, that if we were not blind, or sleepy, and half dead, would work us up to the utmost fear, and terror, and wonder, and love of God's book.

Zeal for the honour and spread of GOD's word is the only way to escape Christ's terrible rod, which now hangs over this kingdom! The only way to escape ruin is to rouse up all our powers to the most mighty zeal for the glory of the SCRIPTURES! Zeal will purge out our lusts---
will

will beautify the soul---and advance Christ's glory in the churches, by the display of his gospel. How much great and good work may zeal for the Scriptures do: amongst magistrates and subjects---nobles and commoners---rich and poor---preachers and people---parents and children---tutors and scholars---masters and servants. True zeal would spread the triumphs of personal and domestic religion through cities, towns, and villages, and bring back again the beauty and glory of the reformation from popery. The sin and misery of millions of men, who are without the word of God, should excite our most indefatigable zeal!

Love to our own souls should excite our zeal for the Bible. This is the best way to advance in the peace and satisfaction of our own consciences: in the strength, purity, and joy of our own minds. Patterns of zeal, in all the best and worst ages of the church, should excite a noble zeal for God and his word. 'Tis astonishing to read of brave and generous souls, even in the dark periods of the church, who have manifested an intrepid and daring zeal for God.

What glorious prophets, kings, priests, apostles, martyrs, fathers, and blessed heroes, have discovered an ardent and inextinguishable zeal for God! whilst, on the other hand, how many trifling, puny, narrow souls have been zealous

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for

for false religions, and the vain inventions of men : they have spent the zeal and rage of their little souls for the tithing of mint, annise, and cummin ; whilst the grand essentials of the law and gospel of God have been neglected, forgotten, and lost !

How zealous are the devils and bad men against the word of God ! to deny the inspiration---to destroy the authority---to deprave the doctrines---to diminish the blessings---to pervert the grand designs---to mangle and impoverish the promises---and break the laws ! And shall not this consideration rouse up all the blood and spirit of your nature to defend the dignity and display the glory of divine revelation.

How zealous are all sorts of sinners to commit sin, and rebel against God ! What pains do they take to serve their lusts ? What labour and expence are they at to gratify their impure passions, and please their vile appetites ? How will they sit up night and day to indulge their furious desires ! What journies will they take ! and what fatigues will they endure to enjoy their insatiable and outrageous inclinations and tastes ! With what zeal do they serve their master, as though they were to be rewarded with an eternal heaven of happiness for their pains ! What a vast number of the devil's apostles are engaged in his service, to propagate his cause, to diffuse his books, to frequent

frequent his chapels ! to become his faithful martyrs ! to sweat, and bleed, and die for his interest and kingdom in this world ! Surely the zealous slaves of Satan may shame and confound you all ! O ye lukewarm, slumbering christians ! blush ! blush ! and let your cheeks burn for shame, to see the devil's servants more zealous to be damned than you are to be saved, than you are to publish your master's glories, display his grandeur, proclaim his grace, obey his law, and propagate and adorn his gospel ! Lord Jesus, are we thy christians ! either let us change our name, or change our temper and conduct, to act more for thy glory !

The more sacred zeal has been disgraced by low enthusiasts, and sly hypocrites, by their plausible pretensions to christianity, or their absurd zeal for its propagation, the more ought all wise, *rational* christians to exert themselves for its defence and glory. I say, *rational* christians ought to employ their best powers and influence to spread abroad the glories of law and gospel. But who are these *rational* christians ? I answer, all honest free - thinkers are rational christians. But who are honest free-thinkers ? all those who use their understandings to find out the truth, with an upright aim to please God, and glorify him for ever : all those who search impartially and humbly into the evidences and contents of

divine revelation, and who are determined to submit to evidence as fast as it shall arise, and are resolved to follow wherever the word of God shall clearly lead the way. These are the *only* men who have a right to be stiled RATIONAL CHRISTIANS; and such men disdain to call any man master on earth; as they know, to their unutterable joy and happiness, that they have a wise and good, a divine and infallible master in heaven.

Recollect the times when you were zealous for sin and the indulgence of your lusts: and let this pungent consideration rouse you into zeal for God:--O! how many years, months, days, and hours were spent without one good thought of God, or one act of zeal for the honour of the holy Scriptures; and let this stimulate you now to sacred zeal. O! how zealous were you to gratify your insatiable appetites! to indulge your unlawful inclinations, to ferment your passions for animal pleasure! Ah, christians, remember the moment when God began to change your taste for sensual pleasure, and to make an happy exchange of the joys of criminal voluptuousness for the joys of religion and the light of his countenance. O! how sweet is it to lose those sweets of sense and appetite for the sweets of eternal friendship and union with God; and how transporting is the thought, that our best pleasures
are

are but just begun, and shall never, never have an end. Well may we say with good Mr. Matth. Henry, "I would not change my pleasures of converse with God in the holy Scriptures for all the delights of the sons of men, and the peculiar treasure of kings and provinces."

Gratitude to Christ for his grace and love, with the distinguishing favours of his providence, should fire up our souls with zeal for the glory and propagation of his gospel.

Has he not created your bodies, and built up the structure of your mortal part with exquisite art and benevolence? Did he not breathe into your bodies the breath of life, and give you a rational and immortal soul, furnished with amazing powers and affections! and if you have any distinguished talents of imagination, taste, and judgment, to whom are you indebted for those singular ornaments and capacities to serve and bless mankind? Has he not seated you in England, surrounded with goodness; in a land where the gospel shines in its native beauty, glory, and power! Hath he not redeemed your faculties from slavery and death, that you might be capable of a divine zeal for his word! and has he not bought the celestial fire of zeal to put into your soul and diffuse through all the passions of the heart! Ought not his distinguishing and effectual grace to rouse up all your gratitude and ardor!

ardor! Did not his Spirit open your eyes, unstop your ears, enlighten your understandings, bow your stubborn wills, perfect your freedom to heavenly things, and fix your whole souls on God for eternity! And shall not all these infinite and endearing kindneſſes fire up the zeal and gratitude of your heart!

Zeal, exerted for the honour of the word of God, would clear up your SINCERITY, and scatter your doubts and fears concerning your gracious state, and your interest in Christ. Many of you complain that your salvation is a doubtful thing, and that you know not whether you are the children of God or no. You have great fears concerning your gracious state; and you feel painful sensations at the prospects of death: you are afraid of the approach of the king of terrors, and know not where death will land you in another world! Now, what is the best method you can take to have your doubts banished, your fears scattered; and your hopes of eternal life strengthened, cleared up, and made to rise into a rational joy and a well-grounded confidence! Why, my friends, try what an exertion of zeal for Christ's gospel will do: ardently implore his divine majesty to send down the heavenly fire of his blessed Spirit: this will burn up your dross and rubbish, will drive away the smoke and darkness of your lusts, and raise you
above

above the foggy atmosphere of doubts and fears, into the clear sky of joyful assurance.

Zeal for the honour of the Bible will dare to look God in the face! because God's heart approves of such zeal: he delights in it, and will richly reward it with temporal and spiritual blessings. God beholds such a man as he did the great Phineas with triumph and approbation, because he was ZEALOUS FOR HIS GOD, Numb. xxv. 13. and he crowned him with everlasting honour: and he will equally approve of all rationally-zealous christians to the end of the world.

Conscience tells you plainly and pungently, how much time you have lost in lukewarmness and drowsiness, and 'tis high time to rouse up your stupified senses, shake off your slumbers, and awake to your duties, your dangers, and your best interests: and how can you employ yourselves in nobler work than searching the holy Scriptures, and propagating, to the utmost of your powers, the glories of this immortal book.

Zealous souls are nearest to God and heaven, and the most likely to come to heaven above all men in the world. If you wish to breathe the air of Paradise, and live in the suburbs of glory, be every day and every hour zealous for the perfection, the dignity, the usefulness, and beauty of the holy Scriptures.

The

The zeal of the Son of God for the salvation of your souls, and the agonies he felt in the garden, the insults and cruelties he met with from his enemies, and his torments and horrors on the cross, should sting up your immortal passions to the highest fervour of holy zeal for that gospel which discovers all the glories of his person, and the worth of his righteousness and blood!

Go to Gethsemane! go to Calvary, to fetch the fire of divine zeal! I will express this grand motive in six plain lines, for the use of our weak memories.

Fetch fire from the cold manger in which CHRIST was lay'd,

Fetch fire from the cold mountain on which JESUS pray'd;

Fetch fire from the garden in which JESUS bled,

Fetch fire from mount Calvary to which he was led;

Fetch fire from the cross on which JESUS dyed,

Fetch fire from the water that flow'd from his side.

Zeal for God's glory, revealed in the gospel, is an eternal grace which will endure as long as God exists: it will flame out in heaven in ten thousand splendors, and brighter than ten thousand suns. Not a lukewarm, drowsy soul will be found in heaven

heaven to eternity: but all the happy throng will be like millions of the most brilliant, intellectual fires; all aspiring upwards towards the lofty throne of God; whilst God himself will return love for love through an eternal duration. We shall then have a composition of all the finest feelings of the mind, acting and re-acting on each other, to raise each to the most intense vigour and fire, streaming into God, and rolling back from God again, to increase the mighty flame.*

RECOLLECTION.

Let us review these MOTIVES or considerations of GOOD to be enjoyed, and EVIL to be avoided, in

* I cannot forbear inserting a most rich and beautiful passage from the incomparable Dr. Witsius's Oeconomy of the Covenants, in his own elegant and energetic words; which no translation can so well express.

Visionem hanc DEI, qui essentialis veritas est, comitabitur amor sanctissimus simul et suavissimus ejusdem DEI, qui etiam perfecta bonitas est. Neque fieri potest, ut aliter sit. Nam quando intellectus DEI ipsum, et desiderabilissimas illius perfectiones, non sub fallaci specie, neque sub obscuris ac confusis ideis, uti hic, sed in nativa luce sua, cernit et assidue contemplatur, fieri potest, quin flagrantissimo earundem amore sancta voluptas exardeat. Beata illa mens, prout equam quod in lumine DEI: Nam ut sanctam luminis intueatur, divine caritatis flammis undique circumdatur: quibus mutua caritate jugiter respondeat. Facitque ista caritas, ut in praesentia, contemplatione, ac fruitione DEI, nullum arduum, lassitudinem nullam sentiat; nova identidem voluptate, ex summi boni summi opere amati intima possessione, et indesinabili ejus contemplatione, animam demulcente. Non enim amor iste amor desiderii, sed exoptatus pridem fruitionis, est. Atque haec est illa caritas, quam semper manere, etiam fide ac spe perpunte, testatur apostolus. 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

WITSII: Oecon. lib. 3. chap. 14. § 30.

in order to stimulate our powers to the most daring and indefatigable zeal for the glory and propagation of the holy Scriptures.

I desire you, my dear reader, to consider every thing as applicable to yourself; then you will enter with spirit and attention into the following reflections and resolutions. Say within yourself, whilst you read, I have here before mine eyes motives to zeal, addressed to my fears, my hopes, my gratitude, my justice, interest, and compassion: I have motives addressed to my honour, my ambition, glory and shame, scorn and disdain, pain and pleasure; and surely I must be stupid as an idiot; I must be frost and flint, and harder than adamant, if I do not, at any time, feel these awakening, alarming motives.

I. MOTIVES

This view or prospect of God, who is essential truth, shall be accompanied with the most holy and most delightful love of God, who is likewise perfect goodness: nor can it otherwise be. For, when the understanding discerns, and, without interruption, contemplates God himself, and his most ravishing perfections; not in a fallacious appearance, nor with obscure and confused ideas, as here; but in their native light, the holy will cannot but burn with the most passionate and flaming love to them. That happy soul, not only in the light of God, sees God as the fountain of light, but is, on every hand, surrounded with the flames of divine love; for which it continually gives love for love. And that love makes it feel neither weariness nor uneasiness in the presence, contemplation, and fruition of God; while new pleasures, one after another, arising from the intimate possession of the chief good, supremely beloved, and its unvaried complacency, charm the soul. For, that love is not a love of desire, but of fruition, that had long been wished for. And this is that love, which the apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 3, declares, abides for ever, when even faith and hope are no more.

I. MOTIVES addressed to FEAR.

I have seen that neutrality and lukewarmness is most detestable to the Lord Jesus; and he terribly threatens, by an awful figure, which strongly shews how loathsome a lukewarm temper is, that he will spew such persons and churches out of his mouth!

O! my soul, what dreadful mischief has lukewarmness done to the church of Christ in all ages. Lukewarmness has betrayed divine revelation: it has betrayed Christ in the glory of his person, godhead, satisfaction, righteousness, and grace. It was lukewarmness in Judas, blended with covetousness, that sold Christ's blood for thirty pieces of silver; that is, he sold the blood of the Son of God for three pounds fifteen shillings. And lukewarmness would do the same now, if Christ was on earth, and within the power of a Laodicean, who undervalues his own soul, the Scriptures, Christ, and eternal happiness.

O! my soul, Christ's dreadful rod will be dipped in fire to scourge lazy souls in this life; or, if found destitute of grace, to damn them to eternity.

The two invisible worlds are just at hand: nothing but this thin vail of flesh, and the breath
in

in my nostrils, are the partitions between my soul and an eternal heaven or hell.*

II. MOTIVES addressed to HOPE.

Wise and ardent zeal is most acceptable to the Lord Jesus: he loves and admires the sublime and manly zeal and fortitude of a generous christian; and will shew himself zealous for active, worthy men: he will rejoice over them, to do them good, with his whole heart and his whole soul. We have nothing to fear, and every thing to hope for whilst we go on resolutely and wisely to support and propagate the credit and honour of the holy Scriptures.

III. MOTIVES addressed to GRATITUDE.

Thou hast seen, O! my soul, that God has chosen thee to holiness and zeal; and shall not I love

* The late sagacious and pious philosopher, Dr. Stephen Hales, F. R. S. in his *Vegetable Statics*, vol. 1, 8vo. edit. 3. 1758, p. 243, observes, that the respiration of the lungs consists of about twenty movements in a minute; and so often the question is put, whether we shall live or die? and it is God alone that determines the question in the negative or affirmative every moment of our existence. A awful and alarming thought, to consider that this is not only my case, but the case of all the millions of mankind on the face of the whole earth!

But we have reason for higher wonder and terror than the above. 'Tis agreed by all anatomists, that the heart beats seconds; that is to say, there are above sixty movements of the blood through the heart in the space of a minute: and thus the question is put sixty times every minute of my existence, whether I shall live here or in the invisible world?

Review this thought, my reader, and let us consider, that, by the respiration of our lungs, the question is put twelve hundred times every hour, and twenty-eight thousand times every day and night, whether we shall

love him for such a distinguishing act of his grace? Christ's blood has bought my soul out of the hands of divine justice: he has bought my Bible with the same blood; and he has bought zeal to put into my heart and diffuse through my passions: surely then gratitude to Christ for his love and death, and gracious providence, calls aloud for the utmost exertions of zeal for his glory, and the spread of his gospel.

IV. MOTIVES addressed to JUSTICE, INTEREST, and COMPASSION.

We are deep in debt to God our Father, and we are equally drowned in debt to God the Son, and holy Spirit. Moral honesty and justice require us to pay our debts: and how can we pay our debts but by zeal for the divine glory!—our INTEREST is deeply at stake. By zeal we shall escape ten thousand evils, and the rod of God, which must scourge lukewarm christians, whilst zealous

shall live or die? And by the circulation of the blood through the heart and lungs, in which you see motion consumed and motion renewed every moment, the question is put above three thousand times every hour, and above eighty thousand times every day and night of our lives, whether we shall stay in this world, or be in heaven or hell to eternity! Alarming consideration! and tremendous thought. O! God, we are fearfully and wonderfully made and preserved.

If any reader has sensibility and devotion enough to wish that he might feel in every nerve, tremble in every power, and adore and wonder with every breath, to his dying moment, let him read the eloquent and devout Dr. GREGORY on the Wonder of Health, p. 65-83, edit. 1756, 12mo. and the most sagacious and pious Mr. Andrew Baxter's Appendix to the Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul, 8vo. 1750, p. 48-200.

zealous christians are exempted with honour: hereby we shall obtain ten thousand solid blessings which lazy professors never enjoy! This bright and burning zeal for the Scriptures will clear up our interest in Christ in a wonderful and delightful manner; nothing can be more alluring, inviting, and persuasive. This is an address to self-love; therefore love to ourselves should rouse up our zeal, and kindle it into a most vehement flame. Song of Songs, chap. viii. 6.

COMPASSION for perishing souls should awaken our zeal. O! sirs, view the misery of a world full of fallen, sinful, miserable souls: here is a whole world lost for ever, without a divine revelation; and these poor foolish mad sinners know not the guilt and misery of their condition, and the desperate hazards they run by neglecting and abusing their souls, and exposing them to God's vengeance: they do not consider the danger they are in every moment: they do not consider that there is but a puff of breath between millions of souls, and the eternal loss of their Bibles and the kingdom of God in a future world! The breath of our nostrils is reckoned to be the bond of union between the souls and bodies of all mankind! and how tremendous will be their misery if they go out of the world without a real interest in the promises of the gospel! Let love to mankind then fire up our zeal to do every thing in our power

to save precious and immortal souls, by this blessed and holy book of God.

V. MOTIVES addressed to HONOUR and AMBITION to awaken ZEAL.

Honour is a lively sense of the fitness and beauty of tempers and actions, and a generous scorn of acting meanly, or doing wrong to God or man.

Nothing can be more contrary to the true honour of the christian temper and character than lukewarmness.

“Devotion when lukewarm is undevout.”

Dr. YOUNG.

If we, therefore, have a quick sense of right and wrong, of good and evil, in tempers and actions, we shall, with intuitive readiness, discern the solid glory and real greatness of a rationally-zealous and generous heart: and we shall look on the opposite with disgust, and loathe it as a disposition dishonourable to God, to the gospel, and to our souls. We shall despise such a temper, as it flows from infidelity, pride, and littleness and poverty of heart.

If we have any honest and godly ambition to be like God, we shall wish to rise into the most sublime fervours of sacred zeal, because God is a most zealous and fervent being: he has an ardent regard for the productions of his eternal mind,

mind, and a keen resentment against injuries done to the richest discoveries of his glorious gospel. Zeal is a noble imitation of God. Jesus is full of flaming zeal for his blood-bought book; and a zealous soul is an image of the beautiful temper of Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of God feels infinite zeal for the glory and propagation of his own book, and will richly reward all our zeal for the honour of it, with the smiles of his countenance, and the grace of his heart.

O! my brethren! how much great and good work may rational zeal do in the church and in the world, as well as in our own families, and towards our own persons. Zeal would prompt intelligent men to pursue noble enquiries into the structure and beauty of the works of creation and providence. Zeal would stimulate kings and magistrates to be fathers of mankind. Zeal would rouse christian preachers to a flame of intellectual fire to propagate the knowledge of salvation by the Lord Jesus. Zeal would stimulate our nobility and gentry to stand up for the authority and glory of divine revelation! Wise and judicious zeal would animate heads of colleges, and tutors of youth, to recommend and adorn the glorious gospel, and they would think it their highest dignity to explain and enforce the lively oracles of God: the sacred originals would be

be diligently studied: the beauty, elegance, and sublimity of these heavenly pages would be displayed: and tutors and pupils would agree to sit down at the feet of our divine and adorable master, to imbibe his spirit, to copy his example, and learn every thing grand and venerable from his mouth.

Zeal for the inspired Scriptures of God would powerfully animate masters of families to set up family religion, consisting in faithful instruction of children and servants: in serious reading the Bible: in family prayer, and devotional psalms and hymns, to enliven their affections. Zeal for God would make an astonishing reformation amongst the lower classes of people; and poor day-labourers would then appear with wisdom and dignity as the children of God. And surely the sublime and glorious examples of well-informed zeal in the Scriptures, and in the history of the church of Christ, should fire our souls with a rational enthusiasm to imitate men so dear to God, and who will shine with immortal honour to the end of the world. And let the zeal of the angels of God,* in studying the holy Scriptures, provoke our imitation; for we are more deeply interested in the Scriptures than they are :

* It is said of these heavenly students, 1 Pet. i. 12. "Which things the angels desire to look into." The word *parakupai* signifies to stoop down to study and contemplate with the most attentive curiosity and humble adoration,----Doddridge in loc.

are: and if we neglect this blessed work, the angels of heaven will be ashamed of us; their example will reprove our indolence, and give us just cause for blushing and self-contempt.

This leads me to another source of motives to rouse our zeal for the glory of the holy Scriptures.

VI. MOTIVES addressed to SHAME, SCORN, and DISDAIN.

With what sorrow, grief, indignation, and tears, should we review the past part of our life. Conscience must upbraid us in the most pungent manner, when it looks us in the face, and tells us how much time we have lost in laziness and detestable sloth: but that is not the worst of our abominable temper and conduct; we have not been content to be neutrals in the cause of God and religion; we have been zealous to indulge our lusts, to gratify our impure passions, to please our low brutal appetites, and serve the interests of the prince of hell! O! christians, how zealous have many of you been to read and study the devil's books;* to sit up late to read plays, romances, novels, and all such vile trash as hath a direct tendency to dissipate the mind, vitiate

* This was the name our worthy ancestors used to give to those vulgar bits of paper stiled cards, which were originally invented to divert that drivelling lunatic, Charles VI. king of France; who died anno Dom. 1422. This was the goodly origin of these spotted papers, which have been the diversion of millions of lunatics for the space of three hundred and fifty-seven years.

vitiates the taste, and corrupt the passions of the heart !

How many little superstitious souls are zealous for trifles : this should awaken in us a generous zeal for great things. How many millions of the human race are zealous for luxury, impurity, and all kinds of vice and wickedness ! and should not the zeal of the drudges of sin and Satan awaken us all to a mighty and indefatigable zeal for God ! How can the zeal of a human spirit be exerted in a wise and beautiful manner, but for the glory of God's holy word ! What a small part of mankind are capable of a rational and generous zeal for the Bible ! and how few in the church of Christ are prudently zealous for the honour of this precious gospel ! The devil is zealous to murder souls ; for he was a murderer from the beginning. John viii. 44. And shall not the zeal of Satan to destroy, rouse up our zeal to save immortal spirits. Low enthusiasts, and putrid hypocrites have disgraced sacred zeal ; and shall we not therefore study more to adorn and honour it, and render it lovely and honourable in the eyes of men and angels !

VII. MOTIVES addressed to GLORY and PLEASURE.

Rational and manly zeal is a pleasure to every wise man in the world. Zeal makes all the duties of religion a pleasure. There is a pleasure in

ardent contemplation, in zealous action for God; in zealous reflections, fruitions, and hopes. All the sublime exercises of religion will be pleasant when they are animated by seraphic zeal: singing the divine praises; addressing the throne of grace in prayer; hearing the word preached by able ministers of the new Testament; incessant reading the holy Scriptures, and the celebration of all other divine ordinances, will be ever pleasant, when sacred zeal reigns in the christian's heart. Religion is never a dull and dismal thing but to drowsy and lukewarm souls!

O! what a ravishing pleasure and honour would it be to diffuse the true knowledge of the holy Scriptures thro' all the counties in England, thro' the whole British empire, and, if possible, thro' the whole world! O! God, my redeemer, let every nation that rolls at the foot of thy throne every twenty-four hours, be blessed with thy gospel, washed in thy blood, and illuminated with the light of thy countenance. Let all the people praise thee. O God! let all the people praise thee, and enjoy thy presence for ever!

In true zeal, there is true GLORY; and we can go no higher than this in our ideas of its incomparable excellence. Real glory is the opposite to shame; and it always includes in it joy in an infinite good, connected with the most rational and ardent self-love. Let the motives drawn
from

from solid glory assault and storm your soul with all their utmost force. True zeal dares to glory in God himself: it is bold enough to carry the soul to the very foot of his throne, and look Christ in the face. True zeal is infinitely pleasing to God the holy Spirit, because he is the author, the feeder, and the finisher of this most sublime and godlike disposition. Zealous souls are the nearest to the spirit of heaven, and the only people that are fit to enter that glorious world! Zeal for God is an eternal grace: 'tis immortal as our existence, and endures, like the zeal of God, for ever and ever. God's zeal for the LAW will blaze through hell in punishing the violation of its awful precepts, and will burn with unbounded fire and terror against all final infidels for despising and rejecting his glorious GOSPEL!

And, on the other hand, what a thought, big with glory, is this! that we shall spend a vast eternity in the blissful presence of God; and every moment the discoveries of the gospel will blaze on our mental eye, penetrate, transform, and bless the soul, and produce unwearied and unbounded praises to the sacred three, for their grace, love, and fellowship, which we shall enjoy without interruption, world without end.

DEVOTIONAL EXERCISE TO CHRIST, as the AUTHOR
of the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Let us conclude this volume of CONTEMPLA-
TIONS

TIONS with a view of the glory of CHRIST, as the AUTHOR, MATTER, and END of the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

The grandeur and glory of Christ consists in his original nature and properties as true God---in his illustrious power to save sinners to the uttermost of their guilt, pollution, desires, and duration---in the bright assemblage of all his great perfections and good qualities---and in ten thousand various and beautiful splendors of his appearance as the God and salvation of immortal souls.

O! Lord Jesus Christ! thou eternal Son of God! I adore thee as the author of the holy Scriptures, and as the author of eternal salvation to all that believe and obey thy gospel!

I adore thee for all thine original perfections, as the image of God; and especially for thy bright and beautiful moral perfections of wisdom, goodness, holiness, justice, truth, majesty, and dominion over all worlds! I ardently desire thy glorious appearing, O! thou great God,* even our saviour Jesus Christ. Titus ii. 13.

I adore

* Epiphancian *tes doxas tou megalou Theou*. The appearing of the glory of the *great* God, (*Kai Soter*) even our saviour Jesus Christ. Note, Christ is here styled the *great* God.---Let us enlarge a little on this title, the *great* God. Tit. ii. 13.---He is not only *great* in his original nature and perfections, but he is likewise *great* in the manner of his gracious government in the consciences and passions of his people on earth: his administration is rational and easy, just and good: how mild
and

I adore thee as Jehovah, our righteousness and strength. Isa. xlv. 25. As our LORD and our God. John xx. 28. I adore thee as the true God. 1. John v. 20. The great God. Titus ii. 13. The mighty God. Isa. ix. 6. The only wise God. Jude ver. 25. I adore thee as God, and none else. Isa. xlv. 22. I adore thee as God over all, blessed for ever. Rom. ix. 6. The God of Abraham: the I am. Exod. iii. 6. I adore thee as the LORD of hosts, and the God of the whole earth. Isa. liv. 5. I adore thee as the first and the last, the beginning and the ending, the LORD which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. Rev. i. 8. I adore thee as Emmanuel, God with us. Matth.

i. 23.

and gentle! how full of majesty, mingled with grace and the smiles of his love: and he is thus *great* in his dominion over all the saints and angels in heaven. He is great in his commission given, signed and sealed, and sworn to him by God the Father. He has all power in heaven and earth. Matth. xxviii. 18. He has power to save or damn; to sink or uphold; to preserve or destroy; to crush or exalt; to distress or comfort; to confound or bless, through all the worlds that God has made.

He is great and wonderful in his throne at the right hand of God the Father, where he enjoys all the direct prerogatives of his Godhead. Christ, in all things, has a special pre-eminence above all creation, i. e. persons and things. Colos. i. 18. His special pre-eminence, or prerogatives, arise directly out of his nature and original dignity. His dignity, or royal character, consists in the most glorious attributes of personal sovereignty, absolute perfection, and perpetuity of dominion. His regal power is every way equal to the executive part of his government; and his royal revenue comprehends all the love, obedience, and praise, which is due to him from the whole rational empire of God, without the single exception of any one creature in the universe.

Christ appears great in his wise, holy, just, and awful government of all his enemies in earth and hell. His grandeur farther appears in his
glorious

i. 23. The Son of the living God. Matth. xvi. 16. The word of God. Rev. xix. 13. The image of the invisible God. Colos. i. 15. I adore thee as all in all. Colos. iii. 11. O! eternal, omnipresent, ever-active God, thou hast intrusted me with this grand treasure, the sacred oracles; and thy will determines my existence and powers, from moment to moment, through life and to eternity. Thou art the life and soul of all divine revelation. Amen.

glorious attendants: millions of angels and saints surrounded his throne in all their brightest splendors of light, strength, and purity.

His grandeur will shortly appear more illustrious in the conversion of millions of souls, out of all nations on the face of the earth, who will heartily agree to be his free and loving subjects to eternity, and will crown his head with ten thousand names and titles of honour. He appears as the awfully-great God in all his tremendous judgments on earth, which are frequently sent abroad to proclaim his hatred of sin amongst the guilty nations. The sword of war and death is under his direction, to chastise mankind for their luxury and infidelity: floods, fires, earthquakes, plagues, famines, and all sweeping diseases, are his servants to march and destroy his enemies, or scourge his friends. He is now, and ever will be the supreme arbiter of life and death to the whole world. He is great in the final issue of all his vast affairs, and the whole of his most dreadful and delightful administration through heaven, earth, and hell: here grandeur and beauty all unite in one astonishing blaze, to charm and surprize his people. And to conclude:--we shall then see him, at the last and terrible day, shine out as the great judge of the whole world. When the trumpet roars---the dead arise---the world is on fire---the books are opened---the judge on the throne---and all mankind at the bar, waiting the final decision of his mouth; then he shall be owned as the great God of all worlds for ever.

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Select B O O K S.

1. Lowth's Exposition of the larger and lesser Prophets, is a most judicious continuation of Bp. Patrick.----2. Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher, by the great Dr. Berkley, is such a glorious defence of revelation, as every man of taste will wish, if possible, to read at once. 2 vols. 8vo.----3. Sacred Zeal a Virtue, by the learned and pious John Reynolds, is the best book on the subject I ever read. 12mo, 1716.